# Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

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**With the Leopard**

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**The Onion Cellar**

108
SEPTEMBER 1962
MONTHLY 3s. 6d.

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AESOP-TO-DATE

## The Athlete and the Parakeet

This is The tale of "Tiny" Pete,
A slender lad of seven feet,
Who heard his new Blue Parakeet
Say, "Guinness!"
Now nothing could be more discreet,
But Pete, who thought that birds went tweet,
Was petrified at each repeat
Of "Guinness!"
Young Pete, he started getting sweet
Upon a sprinter, most petite,
Who, when she heard that Parakeet
Say, "Guinness!"—
Exclaimed, "I train for every meet
On that. And so should you *tout de suite*.
You too, could be a fine athlete
On Guinness."
Soon Pete was ready to compete.
He straddled hurdles fast and fleet
Until he won the final heat,
On Guinness.
MORAL
Many a blue bird knows what's best,
Many a true word's spoken in jest.
A glass in the hand's worth two in the nest—
Of Guinness.

**Guinness**
is good for you—and me


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*Edited by* STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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IBERIAN NOTEBOOK 3 *Alastair Reid*

TIME OF ARRIVAL 13 *Dan Jacobson*

IN THE ONION CELLAR 32 *Günter Grass*

ON THE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF IGNORANCE 42 *Karl R. Popper*

**NOTES & TOPICS**

WITH THE LEOPARD 58 *Archibald Colquhoun*

CO-EXISTING 61 *Anthony Hartley*

REVISIONISM AT BAY 63 *Sidney Hook*

TORIES TURNING LEFT? 67 *Henry Fairlie*

**BOOKS**

THE PRACTICAL VISIONARY 71 *David Daiches*

NOVELS 74 *Francis Wyndham*

SOLDIERS IN POLITICS 77 *Michael Howard*

VOICES AND PERSONALITIES 81 *Anthony Thwaite*

SHORTER NOTICES 84

**FROM THE OTHER SHORE**

POET'S RETURN 86 *George Faludy*

**LETTERS** 94

**AUTHORS** 96

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*Alastair Reid*

# Iberian Notebook

*June–July, 1962*

IT CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS. Over the past ten years I have heard so many Spanish conversations burn out in this phrase. Usually, the speaker catches himself saying it involuntarily, and looks sheepish. Eventually, however, it was bound to prove true; and this spring in the Peninsula it is beginning to seem more like a statement of fact than it has ever done. The phrase waits; the happenings are gathering slowly to substantiate it.

This year, the Iberian summer has been slow to arrive. The spring was punctuated by rain, by thunderstorms, by sullen weather, and even in June the days have seemed reluctant to turn steadily warm, as though they were listening to the rumblings from the ground.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL. Although geography throws them involuntarily together, they have always been uneasy bed-fellows, Spain jealous of Portugal's empire and its international connections, Portugal reacting with all the aggressive inferiority of a punier younger brother. More recently, however, Generalissimo Franco and Dr. Salazar have been forced to comfort one another; they are aging together, and they see, approaching, a common doom.

"When you go to Portugal, don't try to see it as connected to Spain or you will lose yourself," advised a Spanish friend. The advice was hardly necessary, although the situations are momentarily parallel. But Portugal and Spain are "alike save in everything," as Cocteau says. What keeps them so distinct is the most profound of all differences, that of language. Knowing Spanish, I found I could read Portuguese without much trouble; but to listen to it spoken is a disenchantment. The sounds are closed and slurred, the rhythm elusive. One is rescued by the fact that the Portuguese have an extraordinary aptitude for acquiring other languages—most of them speak French, a goodly number English. Spanish, much less. "Spanish does not fit us too well; it opens us out too much." Also, talking with writers, I discovered them to be much more thoroughly steeped in European literature than Spanish writers are. The few literary reviews that manage to exist are more broadly intelligent, less insular, than their Spanish counterparts. And yet one has also to remember that, with Brazil and the colonies, Portuguese is the language of close to seventy million people. A Portuguese-speaking French writer told me that the Portuguese translation of one of his books had delighted him infinitely more than the original. "I don't quite know what it had gained—I would be inclined to say warmth. The Portuguese felt somehow more comfortable, as old clothes do."

I FLEW to Lisbon on a plane which was continuing to New York. "We always have our hair done in Lisbon," said the stewardess. "It makes a change." "What do they make in Portugal, Mummy?" asked a small boy sitting behind me. "I just can't think of anything," replied his mother, "but they have colonies in Africa." "What are colonies?" the child went on. I was suddenly sorry for the mother.

To approach Lisbon by sea is majestic, for the city celebrates water; to come down on it out of the sky is sad. The airport is vaguely tacked to the fringes of the city; the road into town still looks too new. Given the spreading estuary of the Tagus and the magnificence of



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the harbour, the airport will never be anything more than an afterthought.

*Lusitania*—one soon sees the reason for the name, for the light is unbelievable, as though one had suddenly taken off sun-glasses. It whitens the stone, and lays such a dazzle on the city that even in the quiet afternoons, with the shades drawn, its presence is tangibly outside, a great white beast. At evening, I watched it for an hour, taking slow leave of the city, mounting the stepped terraces of the houses on either side of the centre, reddening, going slowly out. "All our political passions subside in summer," one person told me. "The sun transfixes us, and we put off any immediacy of decision, like children going on holiday. Sometimes I curse the sun. It gives our situation a deceptively languid look."

It would be possible to pass lightly over Portugal, as the interminable stream of tourists was beginning to do. "They told us in Madrid to go directly to Estoril, but Dad just had to hear those *fados*." A track team occupied my hotel, oozing health and embrocation, exercising in the corridors. But once I had made my first telephone call and had, as it were, entered into the Portugal of the Portuguese, there was no way back to that easy, aimless loitering along the smooth, tessellated pavements.

SPAIN, WHEN I LEFT, was stirring with a kind of excited tension, heady from its recent gestures of disobedience. Portugal was in an utterly indifferent mood, a kind of dramatic despair. The students were still on strike, and the days hummed with incident; but the longer, quieter conversations finally shrugged themselves into a head-shaking silence.

Portugal, small and backward in the face of Europe, has always suffered from a consequent social and geographical sense of inferiority; for that reason, it has leant heavily, both economically and psychologically, on the existence of its colonial empire, which now, in spite of having been nibbled at recently, is the largest remaining colonial empire in the world. As a European country, modern Portugal has chosen deliberate anonymity. Instead, it has faced the sea, and is more firmly connected with Africa and Brazil than with Europe. The sudden tumble of events over the past two years, however, has dragged it unwillingly into the news, and made further hibernation impossible.

When the time comes to study the rules of Franco and Salazar, what will mark them both will surely be the ingenuity with which each of them has managed to conceal with a covering blandness the situation in his own country, while at the same time riding astutely to advantage on the varying international currents of the past fifteen years. Franco's trump was his freak position as the first avowed anti-Communist, a condition which led to his being pressed, however gingerly, to the bosom of the Americans. (The pro-Axis leaning of both countries during the war was forgotten with a questionable alacrity.) Salazar, leaning heavily on the prestige of his historical alliance with Britain, an alliance more honoured in the breach than in the observance, slipped into NATO. Besides that, both Spain and Portugal had territories which were of immediate strategic importance—bases in the Azores, airfields on the Spanish mainland—and these were at the time a more vital consideration to the West than the residual situation in the two countries. Spain struck the harder bargain, receiving enough aid from the United States to keep her cumbersome economy afloat at a time when it was most likely to founder and bring down the régime. Spaniards in particular look back wistfully to 1945, when first the Potsdam conference and, later, the United Nations took it on themselves to come down heavily on the condition of Spain under the Franco régime; but in 1962, they are justifiably cynical about the rest of the world.

BETWEEN 1910 and 1926, following the deposition of its last king, Manuel II, Portugal was a constitutional republic, but a conspicuously disastrous one, with no fewer than eight presidents and 44 different ministries, and a welter of monarchist risings and counter-revolutionary plots. In 1926, the power was grabbed by a military junta, who found, after trying for two years, that they were unable to cope with the country's stumbling economy. It was then that they invited the Professor of Economics at the University of Coimbra, Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, to become Minister of Finance. Dr. Salazar closed his books with a reluctant sigh, and agreed to apply himself to the problem. But there was to be no nonsense, he made clear.

"The country may discuss, the country may study the matter, the country may make suggestions, but the country must obey when I give my orders."

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At that time, the country agreed gladly, relieved that someone at least had the assurance to give orders. No one then, however, quite realised to what extent and with what finality the Professor meant what he said.

SALAZAR could, conceivably, have been a benevolent despot—until quite recently, a good many people argued stoutly that he was. Moreover, he did rescue the country from economic chaos, and laid down in 1932 the bones of his *Estado Novo*, a corporative state based loosely on the Italian model. His economic theory was of the most unimaginative, parsimonious kind—"We are a poor country, and we must live within our means," he once said—but he balanced the budget, and he had behind him the comfortable sustenance of the colonies, or "Portugal Overseas," as he has always called them. Had Salazar remained as Professor of Economics, he might have become a sour Mr. Chips, his idiosyncrasies no more than the subject-matter of student jokes. He is still the Professor at heart; he treats the country, the world even, as a set of undergraduates, but in the manner of withering professors, he has grown increasingly testy —those who disagree with him will obviously fail the examination.

"The corporation should have a *human* character," announced Salazar, when he formed the *Estado Novo*—which is exactly what it never had. The only real way of understanding Portugal's stultification is to see into Salazar's oddly theoretical character. He has been lecturing for thirty-four years from the same set of notes—he has neither moved nor grown, nor paid the least attention to the way in which the world has altered around him. Intensely religious, celibate, modest to the point of penury, rigidly theoretical, he has never wavered in his conviction that he alone has known what was the best for the country; and the worst of this is that he has grown increasingly relentless towards any individual or attitude which appears to cross him. As his theories have been steadily contradicted by changing realities, he has come to rely more and more on the PIDE, the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*, to eliminate all signs of opposition and discord, and as a result, political imprisonment in Portugal has been both rife and vicious. Many of the people with whom I spoke, even the students, had passed various spells of time in the prisons of Caxias and Peniche. The details are horrendous.

UNTIL RECENTLY, Salazar maintained the trappings of freedom—he held elections for the office of the Presidency, but until 1958, none of the opposition candidates actually contested the election, but withdrew beforehand, under pressure. Although he avoids the limelight, his vanity is more profoundly rooted than Franco's. Franco has never pretended to have a programme for Spain other than one which seems to be called for by the expediency of the moment, and his rule has been a reactive, rather than an active one, encouraging various groups and then dropping them suddenly, giving every man his ear, but none his voice. Salazar, on the contrary, still believes unwaveringly in himself as the mainstay of the country, misunderstood by the rest of the world, but confident of being proved right by history. The nickname he is given by the Portuguese is *Senhor Esteves*, literally, "he was there." His public life is evasive; the papers report only that he has done something or been somewhere, but never mention any of his activities in advance. He rules in the manner of an elusive stage manager whose name does not even appear on the programme. In fact, he is the whole cast.

On the 2nd of December, 1811, during the Peninsular Wars, an English officer of the Lisbon garrison let it be circulated that, for a wager of £500, he was going to walk across the Tagus from Belem to the opposite shore, wearing cork boots. From early morning, a crowd gathered; but it was not until late evening that the murmurings of disbelief turned to disgruntled laughter. The officer never appeared. Salazar has projected something of the same thing; the only difference is that few would dare to say that he had not actually done it.

PORTUGAL'S three diverting F's—Fátima, football, and *fado*, as Galvao wittily remarked. The shrine of the Virgin of Fátima assures Portugal of a steady flow of tourists. The wistful, drawn-out *fado* remains as a romantic incarnation of Portugal, on a par with bagpipes, may-poles, and flamenco. But the greatest of the three is football—both Franco and Salazar have been cynically aware that a great part of the emotional energy they have siphoned off into the stadiums of Iberia might otherwise have expressed itself as political discontent. This year, the final of the European Cup was played, significantly enough, between Benfica of Lisbon and Real Madrid. Under a giant photograph of the Benfica team in the

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window of the National Tourist Office in Lisbon, I read the following legend:

> The victory of Benfica—twice European champion—surpasses the specialised area of sport, and is a demonstration of and testimonial to the national prestige, and the moral values of the Portuguese people.

The citation was, in context, justified; Benfica's win was the most substantial positive dent Portugal has made in the outside world for some time.

THE WORD *suadade*—I asked a Portuguese friend exactly what it meant. "Oh, it's the kind of word seized on by writers of travel books, and is usually translated as 'wistful melancholy' or something like that. Please don't use it. To apply it to us is something like saying all Americans chew gum. What would be much more to the point would be to get to the bottom of our present melancholy, our impotence. The truth is that after the Republic and the *Estado Novo*, we've somehow lost all sense of being able to do something for ourselves; we are doomed to keeping our heads above water, or keeping out of trouble. One of our writers said that what was always lacking to the Portuguese was a strong steel spring in their inmost being. But can we ever acquire that suddenly, after being left so long in the doldrums?"

For some thirty-odd years, Salazar managed to run Portugal as a small, poor, private country of his own; but in the past two years, he has been revealed suddenly, as surely as if someone had switched on the light and caught him stealing jam, by a mounting series of events which have left him unable to justify either his past, his present, or his future—if he has ever entertained the idea of a future for Portugal. The events in sequence are worth noting.

THE FIRST THING which woke up the Portuguese was when General Humberto Delgado contested the 1958 election for the Presidency, making no bones about the fact that, should he be elected, he would at once remove Salazar as Premier. His campaign stirred up the people to the whole idea of the possibility of opposition to a régime which had mesmerised them into sheepish submission. The electoral malpractices were notorious—Salazar used the occasion to make Delgado's supporters declare themselves openly for subsequent listing in his files; but since that time, he has never dared to hold open elections. Delgado himself, threatened with arrest, took refuge in the Brazilian Embassy, and later, from Brazil, set about organising the *Movimento Nacional Independente*, to-day the only substantial organised opposition to the Salazar régime.

In January, 1961, Henrique Galvao seized the Santa Maria, a piece of judicious flamboyancy which was not wasted on the world, and which probably did more than anything else to flush Salazar out of his careful anonymity. Galvao's avowed intention was to underline the existence of the twin dictatorships which existed in the Iberian Peninsula, and he succeeded formidably. Later, in November, 1961, from Morocco he organised the hi-jacking of a Portuguese plane and succeeded in dropping leaflets over Lisbon on the day of the municipal elections.

"A liner, then a plane—we expect him to arrive any day in a space-ship," said one of the students. It is too easy, however, to brush aside Galvao as an adventurer. His shiftings, from being one of Salazar's strongest and most conscientious supporters, to becoming his most active and articulate opponent, have been firmly those of a man of conscience, a man driven to desperate action by a slow and bitter disillusionment.

AFTER THE SEIZURE of the Santa Maria came the Angola rebellions, the first outbreak in February, 1961, and then the bitter fighting of the following month. Galvao himself, while serving as an Inspector in Angola, had previously warned Salazar of the dangerous consequences of his repressive colonial policy. Salazar's reaction to the rebellions was to become even more brutally repressive, to make it obvious to the world that not only did he have little sympathy with the winds of change in Africa, nor would offer an adaptable colonial policy of his own, but that he would not tolerate any nosing into the Angola situation. When, in April, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed their resolution, by 73 votes to 2, calling for a Committee of Enquiry to examine the Angola situation, and chastising Portugal for its lack of a policy, only Spain and South Africa voted against the resolution. Britain, faithful to her "oldest ally," abstained. Salazar began to mutter about leaving the United Nations. This time, it was the whole world which was wrong.

ON DECEMBER 18, 1961, after growling ominously for years, India suddenly gobbled up the three tiny Portuguese possessions of Goa,

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Damao, and Diu. For once, Salazar had right on his side, and he tried to make the most of it, at home and abroad. Every spare wall space up and down the Avenida de la Liberdade in Lisbon was plastered with stickers denouncing the aggression, and the shreds of them remain, even although they have been largely scraped away by wandering fingernails. GOA IS PORTUGUESE TERRITORY.

I asked someone in Lisbon about Goa. "The real importance for us at home was that it dragged Salazar further into the centre of the international stage. But for us, Goa is so remote as to matter scarcely at all. We have little connection with it, whereas most Portuguese families have relatives in Mozambique and Angola. When India took Goa, we were frankly delighted. Of course, the press was full of stories of the mountainous casualties. The actual figure, I believe, was eighteen killed."

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1962, an attempted attack on the Army barracks at Beja, 100 miles south-east of Lisbon, by a group of officers, failed through the presence of an informer in their midst. It was certainly not the first *coup* which had been planned under the Salazar régime—in April, 1961, an even more comprehensive attempt to supplant Salazar failed just at the point when it appeared to have everything in control. What was most significant about the Beja incident was that it led Salazar himself to lose faith in the Army—since then, he has more or less emasculated it, and instead strengthened the PIDE and his detachments of shock police, as the direct instruments of his idiosyncratic personal power. At the time of the Beja revolt, Spanish tanks were reported to be poised on the Spanish-Portuguese frontier. Franco, perturbed, was ready to go to the help of his ailing bed-fellow.

ON MARCH 24TH, the students of the Universities of Lisbon and Coimbra had planned, with normal student exuberance, to hold a rally celebrating International Student Day, when they were bluntly informed by the Minister of Education that the rally was postponed to a later date; prior to that date, it was cancelled altogether. Indignantly, the students went on a hunger strike in the University cafeteria, which resulted in the PIDE arresting over 800 of them, releasing most of them after a few days. By this time, however, the University was properly inflamed, and went wholeheartedly on strike. No classes were held, and the student groups of the various faculties held meetings of protest. On May 18th, the Government passed a decree empowering them to proceed directly against individual students, brushing aside the authority of the University Senate.

Every day, detachments of shock police were sent up to the University, and there were many instances of violence, some of which I saw. I also spent long, late hours talking with the students themselves. Their stand was an extremely courageous one, for they had a lot to lose.

"We realised we were one of the few groups left in Portugal with some kind of legal existence," one of them told me, "and so we felt we had to do what we could. The trouble was, we were always feeling our way, and we could not count on much help, even from our professors. If they resigned, they would lose what influence they had. But now, we have reached the end of the line. If we continue the strike, and boycott our final examinations, we run the risk of losing our student status, which makes us immediately liable for military service, which in turn means that we may find ourselves in a matter of weeks fighting for Salazar in the Angola war. Although we made our gesture, we cannot continue it indefinitely. The Government holds all the cards. But let me say, for all of us, that it has been a great demystification. We have suddenly grown up."

"PLEASE DO NOT mention us by name, or write to us openly about any of these things. You are leaving, we are staying. And please don't imagine we are being dramatic. We have learned. If any official asks you what you are doing in Portugal, say you are studying the Portuguese Baroque; besides, as you are finding out, there is a great deal that is baroque in our situation."

ALONG THE COAST from Lisbon lies the dazzling string of beaches, and the twin resorts of Estoril and Cascais, haunts of the international set and havens for deposed rulers of varying persuasions. Admiral Horthy of Hungary died there, as did King Carol of Rumania. Umberto of Italy is still in residence. Batista, late of Cuba, flits between Madeira, Lisbon, and the coast. Don Juan, the Spanish Pretender, and son of Spain's last king, Alfonso XIII, waits in Estoril in a state of jovial expectancy. Portugal even has a Pretender of its own, Don Duarte

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Numo, a standard comic character amongst the Portuguese. In Madrid, from time to time, I have caught sight of Peron, late of Argentina, sunning himself on his terrace. With Franco and Salazar, they practically form the cast of a grotesque *opera bouffe*, with an easily accessible chorus of the plumed, mounted National Guard, the steel-helmeted shock police ("like under-fed dogs," as one of the students put it), the fish-wives with baskets on their heads, the left-over fishermen, the bikini-and-sports-car set.

In Lisbon, we sat talking, late at night, in a bar on the roof of a new hotel, in the soft air, with all the trappings of the city spread out below—the neon, the beehive flats, the parks, the broad avenues, aircraft occasionally winking their way to the ground. The same afternoon, I had been walking through the shanty town that has grown up like an encrustation along the edge of the city. These contrasts, and the crude, concrete façades of Lisbon's new buildings—concrete must surely have been the salvation of dictators—intensified the strange sense of unreality that seeped into me all through the time I spent in Portugal. It does have all the trappings of the 'thirties; the situation is, given the more profound political exigencies of the moment, an old-fashioned one, which is perhaps why the Western powers have had to make the cynical choice of putting the strategic importance of Spain and Portugal before any concern over their internal confusions.

"They finished off Fascism in 1945. Why should they go back to bothering about two left-over crumbs? We're too out-of-date to be taken seriously. Except by ourselves."

This I heard often. The bitterness, however, is not out-of-date.

I HAVE LONG been used to the censorship in Madrid, to the suppression of news which reduces Spanish newspapers to a dull grey sogginess, which makes the lives of writers and publishers nightmarish, which effectively prevents the entry of foreign newspapers carrying articles on Spain, and yet which is mainly designed to deter rather than to obliterate, and which is often laughably capricious in its application. The censorship in Portugal is much more rigid, blunt, and to the point. Portuguese publishers are likely to have whole editions of books seized by the political police. There is no recourse or appeal. The news is ruthlessly trimmed to fit the image of the world Salazar wishes to present to the country. The daily press makes up for the paucity of news by waxing eloquent on the sports pages. Details apart, the steady suppression of information and the substitution of official propaganda has had probably the most telling effect of all on the actual present situation in Iberia, although Spaniards and Portuguese have reacted to it quite differently. In Spain, lack of information has resulted in positive torrents of rumour and private speculation, as a kind of substitute for action. In Portugal, it has reduced the people to a sullen, cowed silence. Recently, for example, smuggled transistor radios have been selling widely in Portugal; and while I was there, I read a newspaper editorial warning the people that these radios were of a special make, tuned directly to Moscow and Prague, and making their possession a criminal offence. I doubt if the people got the point; whatever they have heard referred to as the truth is something which for long has been beyond their reach.

FACTS, facts—an illiteracy rate of close to 40 per cent, the lowest per-capita income in Europe, statistics on political imprisonment and exile, the ubiquity of paid informers ("No, we cannot meet in that café, but I know one which is safe")—I wandered at odd times down the long avenues, under the towering jacaranda trees, blooming in blue clouds, and occasionally gave up. In Spain, for instance, although the memory of the Civil War still horrifies all who retain the vestige of a memory of it, and has frozen the people into a lasting state of emotional shock, still, life has a tingle to it. The immobility of Franco's régime has been something against which Spaniards have realised an exuberant personal freedom, which has intensified something in their bones—an immediate joy in the living moment, the momentary pleasure of a seat in the sun. In Portugal, I found little of this joy; in its place was a stolid silence, an unexpressed despair. While I was there, the student strike was generating a sharp excitement, but a corresponding gloom.

"I see the students every day," said one of the professors, "and I cannot bring myself to give them the advice they want from me. I feel like saying 'You are young, we are old; you simplify, we complicate.' This context has seeped into our bones, and we have lost the power to do anything more than just endure. We have somehow allowed Portugal to fall to the stultifying whim of one man, and Salazar, like Franco, has a whim of iron."

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How has Salazar survived, particularly after the disastrous exposure of these last few years? There was a time when it could be said that he did much for his country; but in the long run, like Franco, he has made two criminally stupid mistakes—to neglect agrarian reform in a country that is almost 60 per cent agricultural, and to assume so much personal power, without making any provision whatsoever for any succession, that his death—and he is now 73—could easily return the country to a chaos comparable to the one he rescued it from. More than Franco, he has chosen to ignore the rest of the world; and as the African situation has changed about him, his arrogance toward his own colonial problems has been suicidal.

Just before I left to return to Spain, I read in the Portuguese papers that Generalissimo Franco had suddenly suspended Article Fourteen of the *Fueros de los Espanoles*, the right which allows Spaniards to move freely within Spain and abroad. I was puzzled by the suddenness of the decree, and was anxious to see what it meant. As I was saying goodbye to one of my friends in Lisbon, he said, "Whenever we have visits from our friends in Spain, they tell us hopefully that they are waiting for something to happen here. Well, this year, I can tell you that we are on tenterhooks to see what is going to happen in Spain. This year, we feel we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

To arrive in Madrid was something of a relief. The police looked grey and bored, considerably less thuggish than the ones I had run into in Lisbon, the taxi-drivers whistled, the sky had the infinitely wide blue vastness which is always so noticeable in that floating city. The talk, however, was more excited than I had felt it to be for a long time. In so many ways, the climate of Spain has changed more profoundly this year than at any other time in the long, dreary history of Franco's régime; and, most important of all, from the blunderings of the Government over the past three months, the régime has shown itself to be abruptly conscious of the change, where previously it was quite blandly capable of ignoring any signs of unrest, or else quite bluntly obliterating them.

"What has come over Franco?" I asked, as soon as I could. "Why did he suddenly withdraw this Fourteenth Article?"

"In the first place," a friend explained, "Spaniards never know they have a right until it is suddenly taken away from them. As you know, the first intimation in Spain itself that there were strikes this spring came when Franco declared a 'national emergency.' But this time, the Government has been shaken to discover how well organised and serious the workers are, but they have also been scared stiff by the effectiveness of the Communists, both in terms of money and propaganda, and they have decided to keep close tabs on the movements of everyone. Since you have been in Portugal, they have been arresting whole groups of the opposition. And, of course, there was the Munich conference."

The Munich conference, the object of much bitter denunciation in the Spanish press, was organised in early June by the European Movement, a private organisation which concerns itself with the social, political, and economic integration of Europe. Prior to the opening of its annual congress, it invited representatives of all the Spanish factions, both government and opposition—Catholic Action groups, monarchists, socialists, Christian democrats, representatives of the separatist governments-in-exile—to attend an extraordinary session to explore the possibilities of Spain's integration into the European community. The Spanish Government was well aware of the meeting in advance, and indeed, it was not conspicuously out of the ordinary, for meetings of a similar kind have happened in the past, though not quite under such distinguished auspices. The Government, in fact, had everything to gain by allowing the meeting to happen, for its avowed aim was more or less exactly along the lines of professed Government policy. Instead, however, it reacted with inexplicable violence, exiling or imprisoning a good number of the delegates who, as the papers said, "dared to attend." Franco could easily have afforded to ignore the occasion; the fact that he reacted so violently was simply another indication of his sudden panic.

What has caused his panic, more than anything, has been the wave of strikes this spring. They began in Mieres, in the province of Asturias, on April 13, and continued to spread, first through the North, and subsequently across the whole country, into the month of June. Their effect has been to jolt Spain into an entirely new awareness of its situation. For one thing, the timing was auspicious—the Spanish economy has recently been recovering from its thinnest years. Bank credit has been extended, and for the first time this year, one begins to

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see HELP WANTED signs on the factories and offices. Last year's harvest was good, and this year's promises to be even better. The tourists, flooding in, provide the country with a formidable source of invisible foreign capital; and the Government has felt enough economic confidence in itself to approach the Common Market, figures in hand, hat off. What was most significant about the strikes was that they began spontaneously as sheer economic protest on the part of the miners, who are amongst the best-paid workers in Spain, but who have been long dissatisfied with their lack of proper representation. As the strikes spread, however, it became obvious that, far from being a haphazard and disgruntled gesture, they were being carefully organised, staggered, controlled, and directed in the most effective possible way.

There was astonishingly little violence either on the part of the workers or the Civil Guard. For the workers, it was their sense of dignity, not rage, which propelled them. When it got round to mentioning the strikes at all, the Government, naturally enough, dismissed them as "Communist-inspired." (If the Communist Party in Spain and Portugal had achieved half of what has been attributed to them by Franco and Salazar, they can only be considered laggardly for not having taken over both countries long ago.) But, beyond that, the Government did see that the strikes were a combination of several things—a new sense of power on the part of the workers themselves, and some thoroughly efficient co-operation on the part of the left-wing opposition parties, including the Communists, a realisation which accounts for their losing their head, as they have been doing....

THOSE FIRST WEEKS in June, as Spain subsided into summer, have been quite momentous ones. In the North and Cataluna, the workers were picking up their tools and going back to work, but in an entirely different mood. What the spring has taught them is that the health of the Spanish economy has become of much more concern to Franco than the simple fact of his remaining in power; that, in a country where strikes are illegal, they have brought off a vast manœuvre relatively free of violent consequences, and that their economic demands, if they are not met to the letter, are bound to be taken seriously; that the Church, or at least the more responsible of the Church organisations, are wholly in sympathy with them; that, quite simply, they *matter*.

IN PORTUGAL, Salazar has saturated the country with the myth of his own immortality; even his opponents are mesmerised into believing in it. Franco, however, injured his left hand in a hunting accident toward the end of last year, and this appears to have been, for him, an intimation of mortality; his reactions to the crisis of the spring have been those of man who has realised, however late, that Spain is going to live longer than he is. Until now, the prevailing myth of the wishful has been that of the restoration of the monarchy, in the person of Don Juan, or his son, Don Juan Carlos. Conceivably, had the restoration been firmly intimated and prepared for with some obvious sincerity on Franco's part, the people might have felt disposed towards it, at least as a provisional and liberalising solution. Now, though, the changed situation and the procedural complexities make that prospect too unmanageable, however hopefully it is bandied about by nervous Spanish monarchists and capitalists and American well-wishers. In fact, the Spanish situation has boiled down to a race between two very sharp possibilities—that of an intelligent *coup* on the part of the more liberal elements within the Army, where the power still resides, or, alternatively, a sudden rising of the workers, organised by a union of the left-wing opposition groups, and propelled, naturally enough, by the Communists.

Talking with friends again, in Madrid and Barcelona (some of whom I was unable to find: they were either in exile or in prison), and from the huge encrustation of stray fact, speculation, and sheer rumour, I had the impression that Spain has suddenly jumped out of its skin. For so long, Franco has been crying "Wolf, wolf!" about Communist organisation that even the most intelligent Spaniards have dismissed it; and there is another argument (beloved by foreign correspondents) that the Spanish temperament could never accommodate itself to any form of Communist organisation. There is now no doubt—and correspondingly, among the middle class, a good deal of fear—that the Communists spared nothing in pushing the strikes, and that this, more than anything, has brought the more realistic elements in the Government, in the Army, and in business to see that they have much less time, and cannot simply count on the slow economic emergence that has been going

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on since 1959. Their last chance—and Franco's, although he is, I notice, slowly being left out of the reckoning—is to appeal to the country on the basis of a new and sound economic plan.

"We have been bumbling along for twenty-five years without imagination," one economist said in Madrid. "The political opposition has been utterly ineffectual, the censorship is nonsensical, and we have seen enough of the rest of Europe to realise we have everything to gain by avoiding violence and settling down to fruitful economic transition, but this time with some *intelligence* behind it. And we are not so afraid as we once were."

BUT THERE is the other side of the coin. For so long now, the workers in Spain, both agricultural and industrial, have been without effective representation, have been putting in seventeen-hour days in two jobs, have been intimidated by political repression, and have seen no prospect of change. "We are even getting bored with football," one of them said. Many of them who joined the active political groups served prison terms; many of them smoulder with the repressed violence which made the Spanish Civil War the most vicious in history. There is talk in the *tascas* of *"neo-castrismo"*—"We have hundreds of potential Fidels, but what we really lack is one." The experience of the spring has made them dangerously intense; and I feel now that, as the summer gets under way, and the harvest waits to be cut, they are offering Franco's Government a momentarily silent alternative, but this time not just a theoretical one.

FOR THE WRITERS and intellectuals, both in Spain and Portugal, the situation has been excruciating in a different way. The practice of literature has had, of necessity, to remain a private activity, and the situation has forced them into an *engagement* which has only been able to express itself in talk, for the most part. The obvious expediency of the Western powers has naturally made them lean towards Communism; but, underneath all that, they are weary of ideologies. (It is this profound weariness with political ideology which has made *"castrismo,"* the *manner* more than the *matter* of Castro's revolution, such an occasion for misty admiration.)

From a long conversation with one writer in Portugal (who might have been talking for any number of others in Spain): "We are inevitably on the left, because we have long ago given up any hope of a constitutional change of Government. Neither Salazar nor Franco have ever admitted that possibility. At the same time, although we talk with Communists, even work with them, we are intelligent enough to know that much of the time we are only being used by them. You see, we are trapped in a situation which is not simply a political one, nor an economic one, but, for us, more a human one. What we are after are simply the fundamental human liberties. The censorship emasculates us, we have no freedom of comment or criticism, we go always in fear of being informed on, of being put in prison. So our engagement has been a forced one, and in some cases a reluctant one. We are wise enough to see that any change which could keep an economic continuity would be infinitely more desirable. But our intelligence is insulted continually by the stupidity of the régime. The worst thing we suffer from is the feeling of having been left behind by history—what we long to do is to enter the present of the world."

When I returned to Barcelona, I ran into a poet friend. "I'll tell you one thing," he said. "This is certainly not a year for writing poems."

IN IBERIA, out of the turbulence of fact and talk, a mood always emerges, and to read it under the surface is a difficult form of augury. Moreover, the people take refuge in their families and their fiestas, and are able to put on a momentary exuberance as easily as putting on a clean shirt. That is why the surface is so deceptive, and never more than in the Iberian summer. Whatever form the change that is gathering up at the moment will take, one hopes it will never alter the capacity they have for sheer, passing joy. "We don't know what to live on, but we know how to live."

WHEN I RETURNED, finally, to Barcelona, the string of fiestas which always conclude the month of June was breaking out—Corpus Christi, the solemn gloomy processions down the Ramblas, the violent juxtapositions between the tight, white faces of the priests, the rigid, steel-helmeted soldiers, and the gay crowds in the bars. In Spain, one learns to move easily between moods, to accommodate extremes. Now, the tourists are arriving steadily; the bull-rings are packed; langour is falling on the city. To write about these tensions, on the exuberant night of San Pedro, with the rockets going off outside the window, and the singing coming

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up from the street, seems an unlikely activity.

But the tension is still there. Either Franco must move quickly, to give some sense of a continuing future to the people—a commodity he has always withheld from them—or some of those closest to him may ease him into the background and proffer something for Spain to look forward to with reasonable expectancy. If neither of these things happen, the late summer may see the country ready for the violence it restrained itself from in the spring.

Portugal waits sadly in Spain's shadow, like a wistful, dependent younger brother.

As I go down to the street, close to midnight, odd knots of people are still crowding the cafés, talking intently, laughing often. If I choose to sit down in the vicinity of any of them, I know it will only be a matter of time before I hear somebody say *"It can't go on like this."* But this time, probably, he will have no reason to feel sheepish about saying it.

*Postscript—July.* On July 20th every year, the Spanish Government moves north for its regular summer recess, leaving Madrid with the air of a deserted football field. This year, prior to moving, Franco has made some fairly dramatic gestures, which, even although they are not at bottom as drastic as they have been interpreted in the foreign press, have at least given some sign that his régime is facing an entirely changed situation, and that he cannot weather it simply by sitting tight, as he has done in the past. On July 11th, he announced a series of seven Cabinet changes, the most sweeping clean-out of ministers he has made for some time. As might have been expected, he replaced both his Ministers of Industry and Labour, obviously angered by their handling of the strikes; he also replaced the Supreme Commanders of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, giving some indication of his present disquiet over the solidarity of the armed forces, on whose support he has always so comfortably relied; in addition, he removed the Ministers of Education and Information, probably stung by the mounting criticism of his restrictive censorship. Most significant of all, he went as far as to name a Vice-Premier, a new office which he himself created in case "illness or absence" should force him to let go of the wheel. The new Vice-Premier, Agustín Munoz Grandes, is the only General in Spain to hold a military rank equivalent to Franco's; their careers have been more or less parallel, their mutual admiration unimpaired by either the passage of time or events. Most significant of all, no mention was made in the official announcements of the restoration of the monarchy; in fact, there is every indication that Franco has changed his Cabinet and named his possible successor with every faith that his régime is firmly enough planted to continue into a future which even he may not see.

On July 18th, the day celebrated in Spain as the *Dia del Movimiento*, the anniversay of Franco's 1936 rising, the newspapers brimmed over with talk of a new era, in which Spain would "march in step with the New Europe," and with hints of new labour policies, and both agrarian and industrial reforms; the new Minister of Information even added a speech to the effect that he would like to see the image of Spain clarified in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Talking and listening to clusters of Spaniards, I find that neither the Cabinet changes nor the speeches nor the hazy blueprints for reform have cut any ice at all. For one thing, they have been reading and hearing the same kind of exalted waffle for years; for another, they are much too preoccupied with their own personal economic survival to strike any very firm ideological postures. There is a slight chance that a drastic revision of the labour laws, a lifting of the censorship, and an economic policy spelt out more factually and less eloquently might appeal to them to the point of gaining their active co-operation. Most of them, however, have chosen to read these latest moves as the last writhings of a régime which has long ago lost any realistic economic control over the country.

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*Dan Jacobson*

# Time of Arrival

It was just after midday that the boat docked at Dover; and we went through the Customs shed and on to the pallid grey platform of the railway station. With all the anxieties of arrival upon me, in England for the first time, a few days after my twenty-first birthday, I nevertheless felt at peace. One could not help feeling at peace, the station was so quiet, the officials were so homely in appearance, the voices of the passengers were raised in such a clear, almost bird-like way. I bought *The Times* and *The New Statesman*, and felt with gratification, after years of handling only the overseas edition, the thickness of the paper between my fingers; and saw with the same gratification that the dateline on the papers was the actual date, not that of two or three weeks before. So I was in England, truly in England at last. I had not known how much I had wanted to be in England until then; until, on that platform, an anxiety came to rest, and something else within me—an ambition perhaps, or a hope—began to stir.

I remember vividly those casual yet oddly decisive moments on Dover station, and the very different moment of arrival at Victoria; but nothing of the journey between. Victoria seemed huge to me, echoing, dark; and the black-clothed people scurried about bewilderingly under the vault, in all directions. Fortunately, I was travelling with my brother, who had been in London before, and knew his way about the city a little. As it was still early in the afternoon we decided we would not bother for the moment about finding accommodation, but would simply leave our luggage in the station cloakroom and go out for a look around.

The pavements outside were a little paler than the overcast sky; the cobbled space in front of the station seemed overcrowded with lumbering red buses. We did not go far on that first exploration; we merely caught one of the buses to Hyde Park Corner, crossed into the Park, and walked up towards Marble Arch. Already, on that walk, I was struck by what was for me to be one of London's most surprising features: its spaciousness, the size of its streets, squares and public places. (The size of the city itself was another matter, and quite distinct from what I am speaking of here: in a way, the area the city as a whole covered did not come as such a surprise to me, partly because I could not, and still cannot, grasp it: it is beyond reckoning, beyond the widest span of one's imagination.) I suppose I had heard so much about the "tight little island," about England being "cramped," "crowded," and "pinched"—and had also heard so much about the "wide open spaces" of South Africa, about the "vastness" of the veld—that somehow in my mind there was an expectation that everything in England would really be small, reduced in scale, somehow toylike. And it was true that many of the individual buildings were small, and did seem to have been rammed against one another, in a frozen jostle for space. Nevertheless, again and again, on other walks, I was to be surprised by such random things as the sheer mass of the piers and arches of bridges; the width of the steps leading up to monuments; the height of the trees in the parks, and the expanses of grass around them; the acres upon acres of the city given over to railways gleaming in parallel lines; the stretches of terraced houses which seemed to wear their encrusted ornamentation like a frown, and which stood in endless repetition down wide, windblown streets.

On that first walk it was Hyde Park itself



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which was imposing, and the lumps of statuary just inside and outside the park, and the glimpses of streets and buildings beyond. It was mid-afternoon, in late March, and bitterly cold; there seemed to be nothing spring-like in the air, though I was surprised to see how green was the grass in the park. From nowhere, it seemed, a gust of rain was suddenly dashed into our faces as we walked; it did not seem at all to have come from the sky. The gust ceased as abruptly as it had begun. But the sun did not come out; it looked as though the sun never had come out, and never would. And through the streets, between the trees, over the grass, the light *moved*. That is the only way I can describe the thickness of the light; the swiftness with which it changed; the slightness of the individual changes; the way it could change at a distance and yet remain unchanged nearby. It was as if between ourselves and the source of light there had been put an infinite number of filters, out of which one or two of several were being lifted, to be replaced only when others nearer or further from ourselves were removed, in a perpetual alternation.

Within this shifting light, colours had a strange intensity; they seemed to well up within each object in a continual process, instead of being a static, hard, settled dye or tone. And because of this suffusion, this seepage, of colour, one almost expected the objects themselves to be vague in outline, to run together; and so their precision and firmness of line came invariably as a surprise. This was true even of the faces of people, which were either vague or suddenly vivid, featureless or disconcertingly quick in expression. And even on that first walk I saw how fine, how subtle, how eccentric the faces of the English were. Each face seemed to carry within it the shadows, the suggestions, of innumerable others which had neither come to the surface nor been entirely lost.

Unexpectedly, it began to grow dark, really dark, though it was not yet five o'clock. So we had to think of finding an hotel; and went back from Marble Arch to Victoria. My brother knew that there were many cheap hotels in Bloomsbury, and we told a taxi-driver simply to take us there. He drove to Tavistock Square, and we stopped at the first hotel we saw. It was a narrow converted house, and everything inside it was narrow too: the entrance-hall, the manager's cubicle, the manager's face, the staircases, the room into which we were eventually shown. The room smelled heavily of damp; it had a single large window, overlooking a fire-escape and a brick-wall; right against the sky, above everything else, a battery of chimney-pots stood poised. An Irish maid came in to make up the beds; an elderly woman with eyes that seemed to move about too much, under a tired, deeply lined brow. She was silent throughout, until my brother went out of the room; then she came up to me, took my arm with her hand in a fierce grip, brought her face close to mine and said passionately, "You're lucky there's two of you. It gets too queer when you're alone!" A moment later she was gone.

QUITE BY CHANCE I had been reading on my way to England a miscellany which contained, among other things, a collection of letters written by Virginia Woolf to Logan Pearsall Smith. The letters had been addressed, I remembered, from Tavistock Square; and I got the book from my suitcase and looked up the number of the house she had lived in. When we came out of the hotel we walked around the square, looking for the house among the black, flat dwellings on two sides of the square. But the house no longer existed. We leaned over a low brick wall, looking into a hole in the ground. Down below were stumps of walls, some of them overgrown, others showing bits of coloured plaster and tile. Great wooden beams rose out of the hole to buttress the building from which the one on this site had been severed.

I must have spent hours, during my first few weeks in London, looking into the bomb ruins, wondering about them, searching in myself and never finding a response which seemed to me adequate. Many of the ruins were dramatic, even melodramatic, to look at, with bare flat walls like shadows, and the sky showing through gaps which had once been doors and windows; others were merely quiet, waste, charred spaces, with only a few ledges and bits of brick to show the basements of what had once been houses, churches, office-blocks, blocks of flats. How could such weights of masonry have been brought down by flame and explosion into heaps of rubble? And how had the rubble been carted away, leaving the streets trim, though gaping? In the end one had to look at the ruins as one looked at everything else: as part of the spectacle of London, as another sign of the things that people had done over the hundreds of years they had been in London,

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just another evidence of their having lived and died in the place.

Anyway, the house Virginia Woolf had written from was no longer there, and I was disappointed to see this. But the rest of the square was presumably much as it had been when she had been alive and had written her letters to Logan Pearsall Smith. He and Virginia Woolf had exchanged elaborate, self-conscious mock-insults about "Chelsea," which he was supposed to represent, and "Bloomsbury," which of course was hers. And what they had meant by Bloomsbury I saw to be these trees, houses, the glimpses of the university buildings, the traffic in Southampton Row. Was there nothing else? And within the disappointment that the house should have been scooped out of the square another began to grow. So this was it. I had seen it. True, I had not seen, and was unlikely ever to see, any of the people who had made up the Bloomsbury society; but the physical Bloomsbury was about me. And the disappointment I felt was not with its appearance, which was black, severe and imposing enough, but arose simply from my having seen it. I would never be able again to make up a Bloomsbury of my own imagination—a district cleaner, perhaps, or brighter, less hard and angular, filled with happier people. I would not have exchanged my glimpse of the real Bloomsbury for anything I might have been able to imagine; but still, there was a loss.

And another loss I knew was my own imagination of myself in Bloomsbury, or anywhere else in London. Coming to London had not—not yet, at any rate—changed me, transformed me, made a new man of me. Bloomsbury was what it had been before I had seen it. So was I.

BREAKFASTS in the hotel were gloomy meals, taken in a small dining-room where everybody spoke in subdued tones, but for one man in a checked suit who rustled his *Daily Telegraph* loudly and demanded almost every morning, in a stentorian voice, that they give the "cat" to the "hooligans" whose doings he read about in the papers. He was strong on niggers, too. He was like a caricature of the hanging, flogging Englishman of the worst kind, seething with grievances and rages which reddened his round face, thickened his voice, and made his small blond moustache bristle. He was my first living exemplar of the English flair for self-imitation; the zest, the wholeheartedness with which many Englishmen conform to certain ideal types of such familiarity, not to say staleness, that the outsider positively expects some "real" man buried within the type to give him a secret wink of irony, a little gesture or nod of complicity. But the outsider waits in vain. The man (or woman) is absorbed completely in his role. Don or dustman, *New Statesman* intellectual or flogging Tory, debutante or char: it is impossible to say which came first, the type or the individual. So it was with this man; and so too, in a different way, it was with the other guests in the hotel, who appeared to be either students or a few elderly ladies who lived there permanently. (There were no foreigners among them, apart from ourselves.) None of the other guests ever argued with or even commented upon the remarks of the hanger and flogger. Instead, in a curious, dismal, admirable English way they managed wordlessly to dissociate themselves from him without putting forward any views of their own. Indeed, still wordlessly, they even managed to suggest that it wasn't so much the man's views they disapproved of, as the vehemence with which he put them forward. The hotel, incidentally, unlike others in the neighbourhood, did not have a single African or Indian guest.

Breakfast was the only meal we took in the hotel: most of the time, by day and in the evenings too, we were out sightseeing. We went to Westminster Abbey, we wandered about the Strand and St. Paul's and the City: we stood in Piccadilly and Parliament Square; we went to Downing Street and across St. James's Park and into Mayfair. And did I actually see the streets and buildings in front of me, as we went about, or was I merely remembering the pictures I had seen of them, the descriptions I had read of them? It was impossible to say. It was impossible, in those first confused few weeks, really to look at the buildings. All I could do was to confirm that they were there, as the pictures and books had told me they would be. There was deep satisfaction in this confirmation: so deep I cannot easily describe it, for it was not just the reality of the buildings that was confirmed, but, somehow, in an odd unexpected way, my own reality too.

So place ran into place in a progression that seemed endless in length and breadth, and was limited in other dimensions only by my own ignorance. At every point the progression

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yielded some interest; it could not help doing so, for the pleasure of confirmation did not wait upon the famous buildings or vistas, but could be roused by any ordinary street or sign, both for what it was and for being where it was. Only one great fact about London was not in any way a recollection or a reminder of what I had already been told about it; and that fact was the shabbiness of the city.

I think I would have found the city shabby under any circumstances, because of the sky above it: everything, I felt, must look its worst under a sky that continually trailed clouds and smoke low over the buildings, and sometimes thinned a little to reveal a sun coloured like the blood-spot in an egg. But I had come to London a few years after a war which had halted the erection of new buildings, and the repair of old ones, which had destroyed or partially destroyed thousands of others; and which had then left the country to endure a kind of siege of rationing, austerity, and gloom. Yet there were times, often, when I felt that an inward dissolution would do as effectively over a wider area what the bombs had done where they had fallen; and that the blackened, gutted hulks of houses one saw everywhere were the condition towards which the whole city was slowly, inevitably sinking, of its own momentum. The public buildings were filthy, pitted with shrapnel-scars, running with pigeon dung from every coign and eave; eminent statesmen and dead kings of stone looked out upon the world with soot-blackened faces, like coons in a grotesque carnival; bus tickets and torn newspapers blew down the streets or lay in white heaps in the parks; cats bred in the bomb-sites, where people flung old shoes, tin cans, and yet more newspapers; whole suburbs of private houses were peeling, cracking, crazing, their windows unwashed, their steps unswept, their gardens untended; innumerable little cafes reeked of chips frying in stale fat; in the streets that descended the slope from Bloomsbury to King's Cross old men with beards and old women in canvas shoes wandered about, talking to themselves and warding off imaginary enemies with ragged arms. And as for the rest of the people—how pale they were, what dark clothes they wore, what black homes they came from, how many of them there were swarming in the streets, queueing on the pavements, standing packed on underground escalators. You saw crowds when you left the hotel, you travelled a mile and saw crowds, another mile and more crowds, another mile the same; and around them always the same rundown, decaying, decrepit, sagging, rotten city.

One night I walked in an area which I now suspect must have been Paddington, on my way to an address I have forgotten and so cannot return to. I remember crossing a bridge over some railway lines, and looking across the parapet to a desolation of railway lines, shunting and stationary trains, red and green winking lights, floodlights on tall towers, iron and brick sheds from which flames occasionally broke. It was early evening, but the sun had been gone for hours, if it had ever shown itself at all during the day, and white smoke rose in plumes from the railyard and drifted across and between the lights. It seemed as though a town, a whole country, lay beneath me; and the bridge I stood on spanned it all. Further along, on the other side of the bridge, was a terrace, with a little private road running the length of the row. The houses were four or five storeys tall, and were in darkness; each had its portico in front of it, with gaunt fluted pillars holding it up. Even in the half-light one could see how dilapidated they all were; ruined, cavernous, peeling. I knocked on the door and no-one answered; I had come to the wrong place. But I did not move away immediately. Standing on that abandoned doorstep, with the hoarse sound of the railyard in my ears and the darkness of the portico over me, I knew that I wanted to be lost, lonely, anonymous; I wanted to feel within myself the dissolution of all that I had been before by name and background.

Yet, confusingly, this city offered me a continuity between past and present, between words and things, which I had hardly known I was seeking until it was offered to me. And past and present pointed to the future. How could I avoid dreaming of the friends I might make in London, the fame I might win there, the houses I might one day be able to enter?

I HAD the addresses of just two people in London, neither of whom was a friend of mine, and with whom I was unable, as it turned out, to establish any kind of friendship. I had hoped that these people would help me to find a room; but in the end I found one simply by catching a train to the Finchley Road Tube Station, and then walking up the road

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until I came to one of those glassed-in little notice-boards, advertising rooms-to-let and "light removals" and vacancies for charwomen. (I went to Finchley Road because my brother had advised me to try the Hampstead area; he had never been out to Hampstead, but had heard that it was a pleasant area to live in.) Many of the notices for rooms carried discouraging messages like "GENTILES ONLY" or "BRITISH AND GENTILE ONLY," or "No COLOUREDS," or even, testifying to some obscure convulsion of the English conscience, "REGRET No COLOUREDS." I went to the nearest address which seemed as though it might be prepared to take me, in a street that ran directly off the Finchley Road. The house was a three-storeyed Victorian giant of a place; the housekeeper lived in the basement, a school of dancing occupied the ground floor, and the rest of it was let in single and double rooms.

The housekeeper was a woman with dyed blond hair, and a mouth painted in the shape of a Cupid's bow, even though her upper lip did not in the least have a suitable shape for one. So the bow was simply drawn on, heavily, the peak of it coming just under her nose, where a man might have worn a moustache, and the tips of it reaching into her cheeks on both side. She looked drunken, clown-like, in that paint, and I never saw her without it. But I never saw her drunk either. In fact, she was a quiet, artless woman who slept with one of the lodgers on the top floor, and perhaps for that reason was not given to prying into the affairs of the others in the house. And she kept the place clean. The room I was offered was small, sparsely furnished, and fitted with the inevitable, ancient gas-fire and gas-ring. But the view out of the window was a wide one: one looked over the Ministry of Food offices in the Finchley Road to the vague dark spread of South Hampstead, Kilburn, Willesden, Paddington, places whose names I did not even know.

I took my luggage into the room, and then I went to see off my brother at Waterloo Station. Once he was gone, I had absolutely nothing to do. I decided I would go into Regent's Park, which I had been in before, and had liked. But previously I had entered the park from Baker Street; this time I got off the train at Regent's Park Station, and found myself in a park that looked nothing like the one I was slightly familiar with. Flat green plains of grass stretched away to black trees on the horizon; there was hardly a soul about, for it was mid-morning on a weekday. I began walking across the park; the strangeness, silence and emptiness of it all made me feel nervous; even the pallor of my shadow on the grass was strange. Eventually in the distance I saw what looked like the crumbling battlements of a castle—there seemed to be a central circular keep, and crenellated walls going down on both sides of it. It looked ruinous, historic, ominous, lifted up against the horizon. It was the zoo, I found out, when I came closer. The thought of going in to stare at the animals seemed even more desperate than the thought of going back to my room. I continued walking, pretty much in a circle—I had no alternative really, in Regent's Park—and at last came out at Baker Street. From there I did what I had been funking since I had left my brother: I went back to my room.

The house was quiet; it was only in the afternoon that the dancing-classes began, when the piano jangled and the floors shook with the combined thumping of all the little girls who came to the house carrying their dancing shoes in small cloth bags. I looked out of the window, over the glitter of the traffic in the Finchley Road, towards the vague blue and black spread which was only a part of the city, and which yet stretched to the very limit of my sight. I had come to London. London did not care.

SHORTLY after I had moved into my room, a friend in South Africa wrote that I should look up G.; I would get on well with him, my friend promised. This, I found out, was true enough: it would have been true of practically anybody, for G. was indiscriminately affable and garrulous. He was a slight, stoop-shouldered man in his middle twenties, who appeared much older than he was, chiefly because of the prominence of his pale, bald, soft-looking scalp. G. was living with a Cockney woman, an ex-prostitute (or so G. claimed), whose previous lover was in jail, from where he wrote letters describing how he was going to "cut up" G. when he got out. G. told me all this within a few minutes of our meeting. He told me about it not only because he was garrulous, but because he was very proud of his girl-friend, her criminal admirer, and his own association with them both—all of it was so far from the Johannesburg Jewish respectability in which he had been brought up. He lived in a basement-



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flat in Belsize Park: an ill-lit subterranean place with huge rooms, rubbish-bins at its entrance, and Picasso prints on its walls. Gas-fires and electric lights seemed always to be burning in the flat, and the smell of damp was driven out at intervals only by the smell of bacon and eggs.

Maisie (or was her name Milly?) listened complacently to G.'s account of their situation; she was slight and fair-haired, and seemed demure enough, until she spoke. When she spoke, she swore: at the weather, at a pot she might be trying to clean, at the landlord, at G. He used to call Maisie "my love" and "my sweetheart," exaggeratedly, on every possible occasion; but no endearment ever crossed her lips. G. had a theory, I remember, that a man who thinks a thought or visualises a scene is as much an artist as the man who writes down his thought or puts the scene on canvas; and no matter what we used to begin talking about, we would sooner or later find ourselves discussing this theory. He himself was writing a novel which would, he said, demonstrate the theory: when I asked him why, in view of the nature of the theory, he bothered to *write* the novel, he answered with several other theories which I have altogether forgotten. But quite another answer was given by Maisie: "Him! Write a book? That'll be the f---ing day!"

Through G. I met Naomi K. and her husband. Like G., Naomi was South African, Jewish, and from a well-to-do home; and like G. again, she was in flight from all these things. She was married to a tall, bearded, and more-than-faintly anti-Semitic Gentile, who used to torment her by imitating her parents' accents. ("They vanted Naomi to marry a nize bizhnezh boy," he would say, charmingly.) Both Naomi and he were painters, and they lived off what she earned as a teacher in the nursery-department of a small orthodox Jewish school. Naomi was a tiny, jumpy, black-haired woman, who was continually expressing girl-like enthusiasms over cats, or dogs, or children, or budding trees. Derek, her husband, was enthusiastic about nothing, except perhaps about puncturing Naomi's enthusiasms, which he did with an air of great fatigue, made all the more disdainful by the smoke that dribbled from his lips when he spoke. She would falter and apologise; he would dribble more smoke. On the whole it was much more painful to be with them than with G. and Maisie.

These were my only friends in London at that time. I feel guilty in writing disparagingly of them now—just as I used to feel guilty, then, in visiting them. I felt guilty because I knew that I would never have sought their company if I had had other people to visit. But I simply knew nobody else. I used solemnly to ration myself to seeing each couple on alternate Sundays only, I remember. At their flats, on these odd Sundays, I met a few other people—most of them South Africans, a few of them Americans or Australians—but I became friendly with none among them. In all, the first months of my stay in London were as lonely as any I have ever experienced. Even after I had got a job as a teacher I was as lonely as I had been before, after school-hours and on weekends.

But I must say that at first I felt my loneliness to be really disturbing or frightening only when it was brought home to me as something else—as a kind of inward dislodgement or displacement of my own senses. There were two recurring and almost hallucinatory experiences which had this effect on me. Sometimes, in the crowded streets I used to see approaching me a man or woman whom I had known in Johannesburg. I would feel no especial surprise at this, until, as I drew nearer, the resemblance between the person approaching and my acquaintance would suddenly and totally disappear. Then I would realise that I had felt no surprise at "seeing" X or Y or Z because I had imagined myself to be *in* Johannesburg. The shock was always a double one: I was shocked that I should have fallen into the fantasy, and I was shocked on coming out of it to see around me once again the streets of a colder, darker and infinitely bigger city. The other experience was very similar, and usually occurred when I came out of a cinema or theatre. Being disorientated, I would look around to find the way I should go, and a few times I found myself walking perhaps half a block under the impression that in this direction lay the Melville tram terminus, or Eloff Street, or Park Station—all of which are in Johannesburg, not London. And a further complication of these experiences was the fact that Johannesburg was not my home-town; merely the other big city in which I had once lived, and in which I had at times been lonely too.

It was one thing, I realised, to be lonely; another to be lost. And it seemed that I could submit more easily to the first than to the second. I was all the more grateful, therefore, that almost all of London, though new to me, was yet familiar in a ghostly way; and that the

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familiarity should have been so sustaining, even exhilarating. I have said that much of London was a "recollection" or a "reminder" of what I had been told to expect; but what I felt is better described by saying that everywhere I went I saw the visible, external frame or setting of much that had hitherto seemed to exist only within me, and that I had never truly believed could exist in any other way. Now I saw the sky under which so many imagined actions had taken place, and the streets where they had been enacted: these were the faces the protagonists had worn and these were the accents in which they had spoken. It was as though the sponge of my imagination had been dry before; but now, immersed in the English medium, it slowly filled itself and expanded. The medium was thicker and heavier than I could ever have anticipated; ultimately it was more burdensome too. There was so much I did not know and never would know; there was so little I could ever do, in comparison with what had been done and done and done a hundred thousand times, and more. Yet better that burden, I was sure, than none at all.

In the Charing Cross Road, one night, I saw the performance of an escape-artist and his assistant. By the time I joined the crowd, the artist had already been completely covered in a kind of canvas shroud, which the assistant was knotting with ropes in front and behind. The assistant was stripped to the waist, the artist was a bundle without face or limbs, and the arena on which they performed was marked out on the pavement by a long leather whip which the audience was not supposed to cross: the show was deliberately intended to appear obscene and sadistic. The assistant pitched the bundle on to the ground, and then chained it up, jocularly pushing it about, hectoring it, tugging hard at the ropes and chains, and eventually leaving it lying on the pavement while he went around demanding money from the crowd. The skin of his shoulders was goose-pimpled with cold. On the pavement the bundle breathed, but was otherwise quite still. When the collection was over, the assistant picked up the whip, trailed it over the ground, and suddenly lifted it as to strike at the creature under him. But he just cracked the whip in the air, once, and a second time, and the bundle began writhing and squirming, its chains rattling and tinkling against the cement slabs, grunts and heavy breathing coming from within it. It rolled over and over, towards the audience and back again; occasionally it lay still before contracting and expanding in a spasm.

The man succeeded in freeing himself in the end: a wizened, gingerish face peered morosely out of the shroud, and the audience immediately began to disperse, as if everyone in it was ashamed of himself. There was no applause, and the man obviously expected none. He had escaped too many times before; and had seen too many crowds edge guiltily away from him.

Summer came: or rather, summer slowly diffused itself. The weather was not hot, merely warm, but the warmth was like heat in comparison with the cold that had persisted for so long before. I remember looking out of the window of my classroom, one afternoon, while the boys were busy with their exercise books, and being surprised at the sight of the sun shining directly upon the street outside: I had never before seen it so strong and clear, in England. Yet behind its rays there was still a blue or grey vibration in the light, a hint of darkness. And on another afternoon I took the boys of my class on an outing to Epping Forest: the day was overcast, but warm and windless; the brown leaves of the previous autumn lay in drifts underfoot and the leaves overhead were the softest green, so soft that they seemed more an exhalation than a growth. The woods were silent, except for our own shouting and crashing through the leaves. When we came to an open space we played rounders, and then had lunch, the boys sharing with me the sandwiches that their mothers had packed for them. After lunch it grew steadily warmer; the clouds seemed to move lower, the air to become heavier. The shouts of the boys no longer carried as they had done before, among the trees, and I brought them together and made for the road and the bus-stop, anxious lest it should begin to rain. But the rain held off until we were back among the lights and traffic and cinema posters just outside the school; no sooner was the downpour over than the air was clear and bright again.

London in summer was very different to what it had been in the bleak, dark spring: in some ways a gayer, more relaxed city; in others, an even shabbier one, for the sun exposed much that was better concealed. The intensity of the difference was to me unexpected, for in South Africa—or at least in the part of South Africa from which I came—summer and winter look

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much alike. Here the days lengthened extravagantly, the trees continued to thicken and darken with foliage, people wore a kind of clothing they had not worn before and thronged together in the parks, whole suburbs which had previously been hidden by smoke and mist as I went on the bus to school now revealed their black and red roofs, their roads, their football fields. It seemed that in England even the calendar had visible, external meanings that I had not fully understood before. And the chief of these meanings was movement; the passage of time made manifest.

## *II*

I HAD GOT the job at the school through Naomi K., who had known that the boys' school to which her kindergarten was attached had been looking for a class-master who could teach, among other things, English, History and French. French I could not teach, but I thought I could make an attempt to teach the rest. So, after Naomi had put in a word for me, I took a bus to Camden Town, changed there to another bus, and travelled for a further forty-five minutes through great tracts of London I had never seen before, to be interviewed by Mr. B., the school secretary and its effective head.

Of Mr. B. I retained an impression, from that first interview, of little more than a pair of heavy spectacles and a black beard. Later I was to see that a smile of unexpected charm could come between the beard and the spectacles. But he did not smile the first morning I saw him—not once. He was wearing a black overcoat and a hat on the back of his head; he sat at the end of a long table, piled high with papers and exercise books, pedagogic charts and old newspapers in Yiddish and English. The room was poverty-stricken; it had a bare, battered semi-public appearance, like the committee room of an unsuccessful political party or charitable appeal. The paint on the walls was pitted; the light-shade was covered in dust. A glassed-in bookcase stood in one corner, and a desk in another. That was all its furniture, apart from the laden table and a few chairs.

Mr. B. laboriously wrote down in a paper-covered exercise book almost everything I said. He took down my date of birth, the school I had attended, the degree I had taken in South Africa, the fact that I had no teaching experience. He did not ask me the questions I had been afraid he might ask: What was I doing in England? How long did I think I would stay? What did I want to become? These were questions to which I had no answers; or no answers which I felt I could give to Mr. B. But he did ask me whether I was orthodox; or rather, he stated as a fact, in his strong East European accent, looking through his spectacles at my bare head and clean-shaven chin, "You are not orthodox."

"No."

He drew a line under the words "Bachelor of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg" and wrote: "Not orthodox." Then he drew a line under that. He asked me if my parents had been born in Europe. I told him that my mother was from Lithuania; that my father had spent part of his boyhood in Latvia and part in Lithuania. Which towns in Lithuania and Latvia, he asked, but he did not write down the answers.

"You speak Yiddish?"

"No, I understand it, though."

"Hebrew?"

I told him that I'd spent about six months in Israel, and could understand a little conversational Hebrew. But that was all.

"Mrs. K. tells me you can't teach French?"

"No."

He wrote that down. Then he closed the exercise book and stared at me in silence. I didn't know what he wanted to do or say. In the silence I became aware once again of the continual murmur overhead, that I had noticed when I had first come into the building. It was a restless, shuffling, hubbub of sound, unmistakable to anyone who had ever attended a school of any kind; as characteristic as the smell of dust, school books, and chalk that was in my nostrils. Under Mr. B.'s stare, hearing that noise, my heart sank. I was too close to my own school-days to feel anything but depression at the thought of entering a school once again, in any capacity. I would have been relieved, just then, if Mr. B. had told me that on considering my qualifications he had decided that I wasn't suitable for the apointment.

But he didn't say that; instead, unexpectedly, taking it for granted that the position was mine, he began explaining to me the principles on which the school was run. From eight in the morning until twelve, it was a "Talmud Torah." Did I know what a Talmud Torah was? The boys studied Hebrew and the Bible and the Talmud, under one group of teachers. Then,

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under another group, from twelve o'clock until four-thirty they studied the subjects taught in any other school. So my day would begin at twelve. I would have no duties after school hours. The salary would be six pounds ten shillings a week, and I would get a free school-lunch. He would write to me confirming the arrangement. I would begin after half-term; that is, at the beginning of the next week. He stood up, and we shook hands. Only then did he say, in a calm, warning tone, "You will remember always that this school is here to preserve Jewish orthodoxy. You will not give offence."

"I'll try not to."

"Good." He nodded, gave me a last stare through his spectacles, and turned away. I went out of the room, into the bare vestibule, then into the blighted garden in front of the school, and so on to the main road, where the buses ran.

ALL AROUND the school, in every direction, there were miles of houses that must have been built at about the same time as the school itself, out of the same repulsive grey brick, with the same cream-coloured plaster along their corners and around their windows, and the same slate roofs overhead. Few of them, however, were of the size of the school, which I imagine must once have been the house of some aspiring late-Victorian or Edwardian shopkeeper or professional man. But it no longer looked at all opulent or ambitious now; it fitted in unnoticeably with the entire district, which was miserably drab, featureless, shapeless, endless, with not a building or corner you could look forward to before it came, or remember when it was past.

On the way to school there were several main cross-roads, with their clusters of tiled cinemas and brick tube-stations, radio shops, fish-and-chip shops, branches of Woolworths and Marks and Spencer; there were many factories; there were a few iron subways where trains passed over the road; there were perhaps a dozen garages and motor showrooms; there were one or two little parks with green grass and soot-blackened tree-trunks; for the rest, there were just those grey brick houses, smaller or larger, dirtier or cleaner, standing on the road or held back from it by small gardens. Travelling up and down this route, as I did for many months, you had a glimpse of the true size of London; at any rate it was called "London," though you had no sense of place within it. It was a mere bulging of bricks and mortar, a distension, a continuation of what was already nothing but a continuation. And never, not even when the bus went into a lower gear and slowly climbed an incline, was there an end to it. You looked over roofs on to roofs, between streets into streets, from one sprawled suburb across the next.

The decrepitude of Paddington and Notting Hill, of the whole of central London was dramatic, or appeared to be so; it seemed to speak to one of all kinds of terrors and satisfactions, of as many of both as one's mind could imagine. But the shabbiness of these areas on the way to school had no voice, no accent, no meaning; at most they had a kind of pathos, which you felt when you saw the women coming out of the pinched, meagre, indistinguishable homes, carrying their shopping-bags and pushing their high-wheeled prams; or when you saw into the interiors of the little shops which the women would visit, with the tins of groceries piled on shelves, and men in aprons leaning over counters, their hands clasped idly together and their gaze quite still but seeing nothing.

AND HERE, IN THE MIDDLE of all this, barely a hundred yards away from one of the busiest of the road-junctions, was the ——— School, devoted to the preservation of Jewish orthodoxy. Every week-day morning the boys assembled, looking much like English schoolboys from any poor district, with their caps on their heads, their scarves around their necks, and their bare knees showing through their open raincoats; they said their prayers and settled down to study the Bible and the Talmud. They watched television when they could; they read comics and exchanged them with one another; they debated about the merits of motor cars and jet planes; they went to the cinema as often as they were permitted; they followed the fortunes of their favourite football teams. But they never went to watch football, because most of the games were played on the Sabbath; many of them didn't cut the hair from over their temples because that was forbidden by the Law they studied; they didn't buy ice-cream from the carts in the streets because it wasn't kosher; they never took their caps off in class, let alone in the street; they wore *tzitzith* under their vests; they prayed at all odd hours of the day, with antique gestures; they believed literally in every word of the Bible —or tried to believe in every word of it. They were heroic, absurd, and maddening.

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I was not a great success as a teacher. I don't think I would have been, anyway, with any boys, because of my youth, my lack of conviction in myself in the role, and my uncertainty about some of the subjects I was supposed to be teaching. And because of my South African accent, which the boys—who themselves spoke with the oddest mixture of Cockney and Yiddish accents—all found unceasingly amusing, and which I used to hear them imitating whenever I was out of the classroom. ("Na," I'd hear them saying, "we'll furst do histry; awfter histry, meths.") But what told most against me was simply that I was, in their eyes, an apostate. Many of them refused to believe at first that I was Jewish; when, in response to their questioning, I insisted that I was, they bombarded me with other questions. Why didn't I wear a hat, or at least a *kappel*? Did I shave every day? Did I eat pork? *Why* did I call myself a Jew? Did I go to *shul*? Didn't I believe in God? Wasn't I frightened of what would happen to me, if I went on breaking the Law?

I answered those questions I thought I could answer ("without offence"); I ignored the rest. But they were satisfied neither by my answers nor by my silences. And I was always betraying my ignorance and apostasy in other ways. I interrupted boys at prayer, not knowing that they were at prayer. I told them to kneel when we were doing a class play-reading of *Henry IV Part I*, which was their set Shakespeare. ("Sir!" they cried out in horror, "only *goyim* kneel!") I absent-mindedly told a boy to take his cap off when he spoke to me. I revealed that I'd been to the theatre on a Friday evening, that I rode on a bus on a Saturday. I wasn't sure of the sequence in which the holy-days came round, and knew the significance of only the more important ones. I had never studied Talmud; the only Hebrew I knew was corrupt and slangy (these boys believed it to be sinful to use Hebrew for any but religious purposes); I didn't know the details of the laws of *kashrut*. The boys used to enjoy enlightening and correcting me, they used to enjoy even their own sense of outrage at my lapsed, ignorant state; but their corrections and cries of outrage weren't a help in maintaining discipline.

And yet, somehow, we managed—managed almost as well as anyone else did in the school, I suspect. Its organisation was chaotic; so much so that one could hardly talk of it having any organisation at all. I was never given a syllabus, a time-table, a register; there was a chronic shortage of books and pencils, and chalk to write with on the single, scarred blackboard. At irregular intervals—sometimes twice a week, sometimes once a week, and in some weeks not at all—Mr. B. would come in to give my boys French; the rest of the time I was left to do what I liked with them. We went through the arithmetic books and the geometry primer that they swore they had been through twice already, with other teachers; we worked out way through the English grammar book that some of them seemed to know off by heart. And what books they were—physically, I mean—ancient, coverless, dog-eared scraps of things, literally bewhiskered where the stitching along their spines had unravelled, illustrated on every page by schoolboy drawings, held together by glue and scotch tape. They were collected by the "books monitor" (a position eagerly competed for) at the end of each lesson, and piled in the cupboard, along with the Hebrew books, in rather better condition, which were also stored there, and the unclaimed caps and broken schoolbags thrust into a corner.

There were no geography books, no history books, no science books, no nature study books; but I was expected to teach them history and geography, nature study and science, all the same. I was also expected to teach them drawing, though I had no talent at all for drawing. Inevitably, under these circumstances, we spent much of our time simply talking to one another; or I read them stories. *Treasure Island* was a huge success; it used almost to frighten me, when I would look up and see in their rapt, fixed, hungry eyes, even in the strained tendons of their necks, the effect the book was having on them. *Gulliver's Travels* was much less of a success, I remember, and *Tom Sawyer*, too, was rather a disappointment; they enjoyed many of the details, but the story as a whole didn't hold their attention.

But even in the formal lessons, there were times when I felt that we exchanged something of value with one another; and there were a few boys with whom I felt this often. One I remember with especial fondness was a tall, bespectacled boy with long plump limbs and a mild, indifferent manner, who wrote the best essays in the class, and spelt the most atrociously. I suspected him of being a secret liberal, among all the other young fanatics. But almost any of the boys at one time or another would reveal an unexpected interest, or manage to come out with a genuinely witty remark (they all came

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out continuously, compulsively, with would-be witty remarks), or would just give a sigh of pleasure at his own insight when some point I was trying to make would suddenly become clear to him, or a sum he was doing would come out, or one fact would remind him of another he hadn't previously connected with it.

And there were a few, of course, with whom it was impossible to make any contact at all. It was humiliating to find that their malice was equal, invariably, to their capacity to enrage. I would tell myself that I would not be provoked by them—next time; that I would treat coolly and effectively their impertinence or insolence, or their studied, idle sabotage of the lessons. But at some crucial moment in a lesson, just when I felt I had at last succeeded in rousing the curiosity of the class, one of the malicious ones would let fly with a paper dart, or would start scratching noisily at his desk with a razor blade, or would hold his nose ostentatiously and fan his hand in the air, to indicate to everyone around him that someone had farted. And I would forget my resolutions and hear my voice rise in rage; hot, embarrassed, and without dignity, I would see the class escape from me in the resulting excitement—whether or not I succeeded in imposing silence on them—and the lesson would be in ruins.

One of the worst offenders was a small, swarthy boy with the longest and most pious *payess* in the class; he used to wear them curled back behind his ears, like the earpieces of a pair of spectacles. Considering his appearance, that boy was altogether a surprise. When the summer came I used to take my class to play cricket, one afternoon a week, in a nearby park, and he proved himself to be a brilliant batsman, with a superb sense of timing and a classic way of using his feet. He used to knock my bowling all over the field, much to the pleasure of the others. And there was another boy who was an especial torment to me: a twitcher, a liar, a retailer of dirty jokes, a puller of faces. Secretly, I suspected him of being a little mad; I was sure there were times when he gibbered and pulled his faces not in order to annoy me, but simply because he couldn't help himself. I once suggested to Mr. B. that he should be sent to a child guidance clinic; but the suggestion was received so coldly I didn't make it again. Eventually he was caught chalking the wall along the street with the words "This is a rotten school" in letters twelve inches high; and from then on it was agreed that he was, in fact, a problem-case. But so far as I knew nothing was ever done about him.

THE BOYS were all poor: the poverty of the school was chronic, irremediable. The signs of poverty I had seen in Mr. B.'s office on my first visit were repeated in the staff-room, which was as long, bare, and as cluttered with papers as the office, in every classroom, in the lavatories and lobbies, in the small asphalted playground at the back. There wasn't a carpet or a bit of linoleum in the place; not a plastered wall that wasn't cracked and defaced with scribblings, not a clean window, not a desk that wasn't battered, a bookcase that wasn't split along its sides and half-filled with books in the same condition as those in my class; there wasn't a floorboard that didn't yield with a sigh or groan when you stepped on it, or the tread of a stair that wasn't worn away into a kind of splintered crescent; there wasn't a door that hung straight in its frame or a door-handle that didn't turn uselessly in your grasp; not a blade of grass in the front-garden, not a single piece of equipment in the playground at the back. Even the bat we played cricket with was dry and splintered, like one of those stairs, and the buckles of the pads had long been lost and replaced with bits of string. Black, tubular iron stoves which scorched when you stood near them and gave no warmth when you stepped away from them were the sole source of heating in the school; dusty, unshaded light-bulbs hanging from encrusted pieces of flex provided the only light when the day was overcast. Everything was grey, black, brown, dirty cream—the colours of penury.

Every Friday, soon after lunch, Mr. B. used to come into my class and call for two or three boys, who owned bicycles and whose parents were regular in their payment of fees, to go out to collect money from parents who had fallen behind. This was done so that the masters could be paid at the end of the afternoon. We always closed a half-hour earlier on Friday afternoons, to give the boys time to get home and wash and change before the Sabbath.

I SAW VERY little of the members of the staff on the religious side of the school; they were always leaving the building as I came in, and I never had much occasion to do anything but nod at them as they passed in a succession of black hats, black beards, and pale faces. I saw

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very little, too, of the titular head of the school, who was a portly, venerable figure, dressed in the inevitable black hat and black overcoat, but distinguished from the others both by his size and by the whiteness of his beard. He seldom came to the school and could apparently speak very little English. When he did come he depended on Mr. B. for all the information that came to him; he asked questions and nodded deeply, with his eyes closed, at the replies Mr. B. gave to him; he came into the classrooms and tweaked the ear of this or that boy, asked the boy's name, and said, "Good, good"; from the window of my classroom, I would see him make his way out of the school, umbrella clutched firmly, half-way down its length, in his hand.

Mr. B. was not only the school secretary; he also taught in the mornings and, often, in the afternoons as well; it was he who took my class for French, when he could. Apart from him, the staff teaching the secular subjects consisted of one rabbinical student from Jews' College, two would-be business men, and myself. The would-be business men were both orthodox, but only one of them was successful—the bigger, noisier, better-dressed one. He was in "the import-export"; that is, an uncle of his who lived in Vienna, and had apparently manufactured the stuff before the war, sent him samples of artificial jewellery, make-up sets, cigarette cases, novelties and trinkets of all kinds, and he went round jewellers' stores, trying to book orders. He had no capital and could carry no stocks, so the building up of his business was a slow job for him; but his uncle's name was a good one in Vienna, he said, and there were firms who were beginning now to let them have credit. He confidently expected to leave off teaching soon, and go into business full-time.

He carried on his business as some demonstrative men carry on their love-affairs. He was always talking about it, showing us his lines, boasting to us about the orders he had managed to book, describing his customers. It would have been unpleasant, had he not been so enthusiastic and naïve about it; had he not got so much obvious pleasure from it all. He had pet names for his business, he had little songs about it. I know that must sound unlikely, but it is true. "Novelties," he would sing, "are the life for me/Novelties are the life for you/We will make a fortune from little novelties." He sang jingles like this in the staff-room, slapping his hands together and sucking his breath between his teeth. He referred to his business when he spoke to us as "Noveltibirds" or "Knick-Knack-Novelties" or "Mickey Marcasite"; but its name on his stationery was exaltedly English in character: something like *Farnborough Importers Limited*. One lunch-hour, as a great treat, he took me to his office, which was a ten-minute bus-ride away from the school, above a row of dingy shops. There he pointed out to me his filing-cabinet, and his desk; he showed me the samples he kept locked in a cupboard; he ran his fingers like a pianist over his portable typewriter. "Nice?" he asked me, as proud as a child. He was by far the happiest man, or boy, at ——— School.

Poor Y. wasn't such a success as a business man. It was because of the apparent success of the other that he too had tried to go into "the import-export." He had written to various manufacturers of socks and ties and girls' drawers in Italy, and had asked to be appointed their London agent. One or two had responded, and had sent him samples; on the strength of these he was trying to book orders from clothing and haberdashery stores. But he wasn't doing well. At the end of term, wretchedly embarrassed, he approached me and asked if I would like to buy some of his samples. He showed me what he had of them in his brief-case. I agreed to buy a couple of pairs of green socks. The transaction took place in the staff-room; I can still see Y.'s small, pale face, with a bush of curly brown hair growing boyishly above it as he implored me not to tell any of the others about my purchase. He pocketed the money I gave him, and stuffed the socks into a brown paper-bag before handing them over to me. It wasn't really surprising that he disliked S., the successful one, so much; and used to accuse him of shirking his duties, spying for the school secretary, and thinking of nothing but money. But he never made these accusations in S.'s presence; instead, they used to have interminable, futile arguments about things they had seen on the television or read in the newspapers. If S. had enjoyed a programme, Y. said he'd hated it; if S. thought the accused in a current murder-trial innocent, then Y. said he was guilty; if S. prophesied a war anywhere on the globe, Y. insisted nothing would happen.

The rabbinical student and I were frequently called upon to adjudicate in these disputes; both of us did our best to remain aloof from them. The rabbinical student was invariably quiet in the staff-room. He wore rimless fragile glasses, and a fluff of gingery beard on his chin; he

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smiled often, at nothing in particular. I don't think he and I exchanged more than twenty sentences, that weren't connected with work, in the months I was at the school. Looking back now, it seems rather strange that none of them showed any particular curiosity about me; they didn't ask me what I was doing in England, or whether I intended making a career out of teaching. Nor did they ever ask me to their homes. At the time I put down their lack of curiosity to the fact that they were all refugees, who had come to England just before or during the war; compared to their own, my reasons for having come to England (whatever they assumed them to be) must have seemed frivolous.

## *III*

In England, it became clear to me that, through England, I wanted to escape from the ironies, ambiguities, and humiliations of my own position as a Jew, as a white South African, as a "colonial," as a young man who didn't know what to do with his life. I wanted in some way to share in the country's strength; to take into myself something of the power I saw deployed in its books and buildings, its institutions and industries, in the complexity of its arrangements and the simplicity of the ideas it most liked to hold about itself.

In return, I was prepared to give what I could. As I wandered around London I felt a protective concern for the country, which was at the same time a kind of awe, even a kind of reverence, towards it. This emotion was associated particularly in my mind with the thought of the last war; and I remember feeling it most strongly outside St. Paul's one morning, looking over the devastation around the cathedral. Only a few blocks of buildings rose irregularly to any height; over most of the area there were just footpaths across the bomb-sites, running between low walls like hedges. One really felt oneself to be standing on a hilltop, looking down over the ruins of a city, as an archæologist might be able to see it. And I found myself thinking over and over, "Don't let this happen again. Don't let this happen again." I was not directing this injunction to anyone in particular, as far as I knew; it was simply a kind of amateur prayer, addressed to history in general.

But I would not have cared nearly so much, I knew, if I hadn't thought England rich, grand, and imposing as well as vulnerable; if, to give the most obvious example of the grandness I mean, the great black bubble of the dome of St. Paul's hadn't swelled itself in the air directly behind me, over the injured landscape. Weakness and destitution wouldn't have been able to rouse my protective instinct in this way; if I hadn't been filled with admiration and wonder, I wouldn't have been filled with solicitude either.

Wonder: anything in those days could be an occasion for wonder. I just had to look at the windows of the buildings in London—the windows merely—to be overwhelmed by a sense of the richness and diversity of the life that had achieved its embodiment in England. In South Africa a window was oblong, square, or round, framed in steel or wood. And that was all, that exhausted the varieties of windows and the interest you could get from them. But on my very first morning in London I had noticed the vertical, fan-like setting of brick above each window in the Bloomsbury terraces, so that they all looked rather like eyes, with eyebrows raised in faint surprise; later that same morning, when I went to my bank near South Africa House, I saw that the windows of the Victorian office blocks along Northumberland Avenue were surrounded by pilasters, by terra cotta fruits, by ribbons and wreaths. From then on it became almost a nervous habit of mine to glance at the windows of buildings; and every kind of window I saw seemed to have its own distinctive character, its own kind of arch, bay, surround, recess, sill, lintel, pediment, and a hundred other features for which I had no words, at which I could merely stare before moving on.

And this was to look, briefly enough, at few enough windows! The country seemed to me so full, so packed with life, that again and again I couldn't help feeling that if I were just to close my hand in the air, I would grasp more than air: I would find between my fingers a texture, a colour, a weight.

Once I had settled into my job at the school I used to go much less often to the West End; usually I went in only on Friday evenings, after I'd been paid for my work. When I had been delayed at school I would arrive at Piccadilly Circus or Leicester Square just as the rush-hour began; and it used to be part of my Friday evening's entertainment simply to stand at the foot of the packed escalators of these stations, looking up at the crowds descending. Always it seemed as though they were about to

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topple and fall down the steep incline, of their own sheer weight; one felt dizzy standing beneath them, watching the endless human chain wheel over and come down towards one. And no matter how quickly the people stepped from the stairs and hurried away once they had reached the bottom, the wedge on the escalator remained solid, unbroken, it filled entirely the space that was given to it.

Altogether, the London underground was one of the great sights of the city for me. I had never imagined that it would be so complex; that I would spend as much of my time in it as I did; that it would dispose of such huge numbers of people; that it would have its characteristic architecture, light, air, smells, noises, and impose upon the people who travelled in it a characteristic expression of the face; that the stations would be so much alike and yet differ so much from one another, and from themselves at different times of the day. In fact, while I was still unfamiliar with it—before it became merely commonplace, an indifferent and uncomfortable passage through which I had to make my way so many times a week—the underground seemed to me a symbol or image of a kind that was all the more portentous for being so obscure. It was impossible for me to keep out of my mind all sorts of half-ideas about purgatory and the after-life, as I bewilderedly made my way through one subterranean tunnel to the next, among the hurrying crowds, bent upon their own destinations; yet, at the same time, the underground appeared to be the true centre or source of the city's life, rather than an image of its death. One felt inside it, more so than anywhere else, as though London were nothing but a great machine, contracting and expanding to its own deep, mechanical rhythms; a machine which the people who lived in London did not control but merely had to obey. So they were brought together and hurled apart again, as the machine dictated. But even to think of the machine "dictating" to the anonymous crowds made it seem too personal. The machine itself did not know what it was doing: it merely flashed its lights, moved its stairs, sent its trains hurtling along grey, ribbed tunnels, festooned with cables; its servants cried out "Mind the gap" above the sigh of closing doors and the shuffling sound of the passengers' feet, above the thunderous fading roar of other trains in other tunnels. Sometimes the machine breathed in gales that cut through one's clothing, at other times the air hung still and oppressively warm; sometimes the trains stopped in mid-tunnel and waited in a humming silence before moving on again; at times the platforms and the moving stairs were deserted, and yet the trains still emerged and departed, the stairs rattled and folded in and out of each other. And all this vast activity and movement seemed to serve no purpose but that of its own continuation, could not serve any other purpose, for there was no consciousness that guided or directed it.

I used to wonder, at first, why there were so few literary references to the underground; before I learned to take it for granted, I wondered why everyone else did. In fact, there was one writer I knew of who had used it in his work, and it is partly for this reason, and not only because of what he has written about the City, that T. S. Eliot has remained for me preeminently the poet of London; as much London's poet as Dickens is still its novelist.

Anyway, on these Friday evenings I would emerge from the underground station and make straight for the theatre of my choice. There I would book a stool in the gallery queue, and then I would try to fill in the time that remained until the theatre opened. Usually, I just walked around the West End and Soho, and looked at shop-windows and people, or grubbed among the second-hand books in the Charing Cross Road; I went a few times to the National Gallery; I ate some kind of a meal in a Lyons tea-room. I was always early for the theatre, and was often enough glad to get into it simply to rest my feet.

The cocooned, cosy plush and gilt of the theatres, their ornate chandeliers and braided, pink lightshades in clusters here and there on the walls, were all novelties and yet familiar from the descriptions I had read of them; they were "sights" in much the same way as the faces of the actors and actresses I had seen previously only on the cinema screen. As much as when I walked in the streets, I was sightseeing at the theatre. But this was not the only reason why I went so regularly. I hoped earnestly, devoutly, to discover in myself a passion for the theatre of the kind I had so often read about. I wanted to feel in myself that "hush of expectancy" when the "house-lights were dimmed"; to "store up for myself" memories of "enchanted evenings" and "unforgettable performances"; to be one of those "young people" whose "devotion to the theatre" helped to "keep it alive"—not with the money they spent on their seats in "the gods"

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but with their "discriminating taste" and "undimmed enthusiasm."

It goes almost without saying that I cannot now remember a single one of the plays I saw; not a title, not a plot, not a joke, not a stage-setting. All I can remember are my own efforts to persuade myself into an enthusiasm I was never really able to convince myself I felt. That I should have put so much effort into a hopeless endeavour—and one which I now feel it would have been shameful to have succeeded in—shows, I suppose, just how little I knew about myself, or the London theatre.

Of course, I hoped also that up there in "the gods" I would meet some beautiful, young, sincere, lonely, ardent, female theatre-lover, and that a friendship, and more than a friendship, would develop between us. Actually, the closest I came to it was to see several times at various theatres a quite pretty girl, who came to recognise me, and who I think would have welcomed an approach from me. What held me back was that this girl was always accompanied by her quite youthful and quite good-looking mother—which was something my fantasies had never bargained for. I couldn't possibly tackle them both, of that I was sure; so the girl and I never did more than exchange a few uncertain smiles.

In the novels I read, young men in the position I was in were continually picking up attractive girls in streets and parks and bookshops; I had no such luck. As a matter of fact, of the people I have since known in London, only one has seemed able to do it again and again. This man found his girls for the most part in coffee-bars, which weren't in existence my first year in London, and in museums, which I hardly ever visited. But I doubt if I'd have been very much more successful even if coffee-bars had been in existence and had I made a habit of frequenting museums. I hadn't the knack. All I did have was a host of images of the girl I would eventually meet: sometimes she was English, sometimes South African; sometimes she was tall, sometimes slight; sometimes she was dark, sometimes fair; sometimes she was sophisticated, sometimes naïve; invariably, she was generous, high-spirited, and compliant. But because I was without friends, visited no homes, went to no parties, it seemed that I had no chance of meeting her—though all too often I would catch a glimpse of her, in a crowd of other girls, or on the arm of another man.

And always, everywhere, I felt myself to be touched, nudged, pulled by the sexual underworld of London; an underworld much wider than that of the whores who stood on every West End corner after nightfall, or of the homosexuals hanging about outside the men's lavatories in Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square tube-stations. These the newspapers wrote about every week-end; but they never said a word about the furtive encounters and withdrawals that took place in darkened, half-empty cinemas; about the rubber-shops with their dangling trusses, books on flagellation, and their offers to send you "further literature" in "plain wrappers"; about the wild, imploring graffiti scribbled upon the doors and walls of practically every public lavatory; about the packed tube-trains, where the crowds swayed promiscuously against one another, heads respectably averted, bodies rammed together. Or, for that matter, about the sedate, secluded middle-class house in which I lodged, and in which almost every room seemed filled with whispers that sometimes rose to cries, sniggers, sobs, expostulations, behind the closed doors.

I KNEW none of the people who lodged in the house; we passed each other on the stairs, and greeted one another, and that was all. And yet it surprises me now to realise just how much I did learn about them; at least about those who lived on my landing. There was, for example, the Danish student (so-called: he was much older in looks than any student had the right to be) in the room next door to mine. His girl spent one week in his room crying almost continuously, and then left for Australia: that I guessed from the silence which descended upon his room when the week was over, and from the Australian air-letters addressed to him, in a feminine hand, which shortly afterwards began to appear on the window-ledge where the housekeeper left all our letters. Had she threatened to go to Australia unless he married her? Or was she Australian, and had she wept simply because she had to go home and he wouldn't follow her? In any case, the Scandinavian did not pine for her. The last girl had cried; his new one laughed. I would hear the deep, gurgling sound of her laughter at all hours of the night—above the sound of Radio Luxembourg, to which their radio seemed to be permanently tuned.

The room next to mine on the other side was occupied by an elderly German-Jewish widow, whose daughter, I gathered from overheard

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snatches of conversation in German and English, was unhappily married. The daughter complained to her mother about her husband's stinginess with money, his angry moods, his absences; the mother counselled patience. I saw the husband a few times on the stairs: a tall, fair, high-coloured man, with the face of a disgruntled boy. To judge from his accent, he too was a German-Jew, but he always spoke in English. He had almost as many complaints against his wife as she had against him; and what was very odd about his way of delivering these complaints was that he seemed to take it for granted that his mother-in-law would agree with him. "She's impossible, isn't she?" he would say in conclusion to his mother-in-law about her daughter, or, "What can you do with someone like that, tell me, please?" These confrontations took place about once a week (the daughter came three or four times a week), and usually ended up with the three of them going, at the mother's suggestion, to the pictures.

Across the landing there lived the quietest of the couples on my floor: a tall, well-spoken Englishman in his middle thirties, who went off every morning in a dark suit and bowler hat to the bank or insurance office in which he worked, and his small, curly-headed Cypriot boy-friend. The Cypriot was apparently supported by his friend and seldom went out; he used to potter about the house, and have long conversations with the housekeeper, and listen to the soap-operas on the radio. When he did go out he wore clothes of a very different kind from those of his friend: striped shirts, black jeans, belts with big silver buckles. The two of them seemed staid and settled, and I shall never know why the Englishman suddenly left; certainly, there had been no loud rows before his departure.

It must have been just two or three days after the Englishman had left that the Cypriot knocked on my door. He had come with a suggestion, or an invitation. Wouldn't I move in with him? We had never done more than greet one another, as I have said, or exchange a few remarks about the weather. Now he stood with his back against the wall, a pace away from the door, and smiled at me guilelessly. "It's a fine room," he said. "It's too dear for me. But with you—with the two of us—it's easy." And he made a gesture with his hand, twisting the palm of it open, towards me. The gesture seemed somehow both obscene and touching. Still he smiled; he was a round-cheeked, brown-eyed boy, with white teeth and dark curls that fell all over his forehead. I wondered with some alarm what it was about me that had made him think I might be a successor to that departed Englishman. "No, thank you," I said. "It's kind of you to ask me, but—"

"See the room?" he suggested. "It's much bigger than this one. We can be comfortable there, you wait and see. I do all the work in the room. I keep it clean, I can cook, I look after everything." Hastily, I said that I was preparing for an examination, I studied in the evenings, and couldn't possibly consider sharing with anyone.

"Oh," he assured me, his smile even more artless than before, "I can be very quiet."

I simply shook my head in silence, looking at him; my gaze, I'm sure, was far more embarrassed than the one he met it with. But he was very polite; almost condescending. He shrugged, said he hoped I didn't mind that he'd asked me, and slid out of the room. A few days later he was gone. His room was then occupied by a couple of girl-students, one of whom I thought very attractive in the soft, eager, earnest, innocent way that characterises so many English girl-students. Even when you know nothing about them or their circumstances, girls like these somehow make you feel that you should sympathise with their views and admire their pluck. I looked forward to meeting this girl on the stairs; when we did meet I tried to make our conversation last as long as possible. But the development of our friendship was cut short by an unfortunate accident. All the people on my landing shared a single, huge bathroom-cum-lavatory. One afternoon I opened the door of this room; and there, on the lavatory seat, sat the girl, with her pants around her ankles. She had forgotten to lock the door behind her. For the briefest and most protracted of seconds we stared at one another; then she gave a kind of moan, and reached down towards her ankles, while I retreated, muttering apologies and banging the door closed behind me.

From then on the poor girl couldn't say a word to me. When she saw me she blushed, she ducked, she scurried away down the passage or up the stairs. As long as I lived in the house she never forgave me, or herself, for what had happened.

WHEN I HAD told the Cypriot that I was working for an examination I had been telling a lie. But it was true that I was working

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almost every evening, at this time. I had begun writing, in earnest—or so I thought. At any rate, what drove me to start working seemed earnest enough to me.

I was still seeing the K.'s, and G. and his girl-friend, on alternate weeks; in addition there was a girl whom I had known at university in Johannesburg whom I saw even more infrequently; there were friends of K. and G. with whom I spent occasional evenings. Generally, what this meant was that in every week I was in the company of others one evening and one week-end afternoon; the other six nights, the rest of the week-ends, I was on my own. And I was no longer able to fill them, as I'd been able to at first, simply by being on the move. Loneliness had had its pleasures; there had been something extraordinarily satisfying, at times, in the thought that none of the people who ever saw me knew who I was; conversely, there had been a kind of exhilaration in the thought that at any given moment none of the people who *did* know me could guess just where I was, what I was doing, where I would go next. But I found that these moments of excitement or self-satisfaction were recurring less and less frequently. And I had begun to have fears that were worse than those mild hallucinations or displacements that I'd been afflicted with in my first few weeks in the city, when again and again, in broad daylight, I had found myself thinking I was back in Johannesburg, or had made a habit of "recognising" people who in fact were complete strangers to me. Chiefly, I was afraid now of falling ill or having an accident. "It could be weeks before anyone would even know!"—that seemed to be the real horror of the situation.

Actually, I was exaggerating the forlornness of my own position. Now that I was working, any absence of mine would certainly have been noticed; and, after a very few days Mr. B. would have gone over to the nursery department of the school (which was run, by the way, quite independently from his) and would have asked Naomi what had happened to me. And Naomi would, I'm sure, have taken the trouble to come to my room to find out. But what could she have done for me if she did come? And what if I wasn't there? What if I was in some hospital, miles away—unconscious, perhaps? It didn't occur to me that in that case I would then be unconscious of my own loneliness as well; but I doubt if the thought would have been of much comfort anyway. Nor did I find it much of a comfort to remind myself that my health had so far been excellent, and showed no signs of deteriorating suddenly.

Still, it's always easy to be superior to one's own anxieties when one no longer feels them; and the truth is that if I had fallen ill I would probably have had a thoroughly miserable time of it. In the best of health, I was finding my loneliness quite heavy enough a burden, anyway. It was at this time, I remember, that the notices which used to be posted up outside Tottenham Court Road police-station began to have a macabre fascination for me. "Found: in Thames, near Greenwich, body of man, aged 20–23, wearing brown sports jacket and grey flannels, height 5 ft. 7 in., scar on right cheek...." "Found: 63 ——— Crescent N.W., body of woman, aged 50 years approx...." To prevent such a notice ever being posted up about me, I wrote my name and parents' address in South Africa on a piece of paper, and put it in my wallet. It embarrassed me to do this, I remember; but I did it, nevertheless.

So I stayed in my room more than ever before; it seemed to me I was safer there than anywhere else. And because I had to do something while I was in my room, I began to write a novel. However, if I began work on it as a means of self-defence, it wasn't long before I thought of the book as my attack: as the instrument with which I would subdue the city beyond the walls of my room. I had no precise idea of what London would look like to me once it was subdued; but I was sure, at least, that it would seem a very different place from what it did then. Months later I finished the novel, and was glad to put it quietly out of sight. London had changed for me, in the meantime; but not as a result of anything that novel had ever done to it, or ever would.

ONE AFTERNOON I came home early from school—I forget why—and found a little girl waiting on the doorstep. She had come for her dancing-lesson (the ground-floor of the house was still occupied by the school of dancing); she told me, while I looked through my pockets for my key, that her daddy had brought her in his car, and that he was going to fetch her when the lesson was over. She said she'd been ringing at the door-bell but no one had answered it.

At the time I wasn't struck by the oddity of this; usually, on afternoons when the lessons were held in the house, the front-door was simply left wide open. I cannot remember what

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the little girl looked like, except that she had freckles on her face, and that like all the little girls who came for their classes she carried her dancing-shoes in a little cloth bag. What I do recall was that her voice was sweet and clear and that I was touched by the volubility with which she chattered to me during the minute or two we stood together on the step. As it happened, I really had to hunt for my key, in every pocket, before I finally found it. Then I opened the door, and I know that I felt rather pleased with myself for having been able to help her. Once we were inside I simply went straight up the stairs, and she very politely called after me, from the big, gloomy lobby of the house, "Goodbye. Thank you." I replied to her without looking back.

How long it was before she called to me again, I cannot now say. Indeed, in many ways the whole incident has the quality of a bad dream for me; except that I know, to my regret, that it wasn't a dream, that it actually happened. I think that I settled down to read, once I was in my room, or perhaps I just lay on my bed; in any case, I remained awake. It seems almost unbelievable to me now that I could have sat or lain there, in that dead-silent house without thinking that something was amiss. But I know quite well how I did it. I had simply forgotten about the little girl, entirely; I'd smiled at her, and listened to her chatter, and opened the door for her, and then she had just gone out of my mind, as though I'd never seen her. So much so that I didn't even think of her when I heard a child's voice calling out, of all things, "I'm only seven."

I thought the call came from somewhere outside in the street; it struck me as rather a strange thing for a child to shout out, but I assumed it was some part of a game or an argument. Afterwards, that first call struck me as being as pitiful as anything that followed; it showed so clearly how her own puniness, in that enormous, silent house must have been borne in upon her. But I wasn't thinking of her, then. Her first call was followed by a long silence; and then by a truly terrifying shriek: "Mister Man! help me! I don't know my way home! You're my friend!" A moment later the front door shut with a bang that shook the entire house.

And only then, when it was too late, I realised that it was the little girl that I'd let into the house who had called; that it was to *me* that she was calling. Immediately, I knew what had happened; I should have known before I had opened the door which shouldn't have been closed; I should certainly have known when I had left the child in that still, empty lobby. There was no dancing-lesson that afternoon; it had been cancelled for some reason, and her parents had either not been told or had forgotten, and had dropped her at the gate as usual. And then I had let her in. And there was not a soul in the house apart from myself; by some mischance everyone was out—the housekeeper, the widow, the girl-students, everyone. The little girl had sat alone there in the half-darkness, and waited, and waited, until she had been overwhelmed by the terror of her situation. But she hadn't forgotten me in the way that I'd forgotten her; she had cried out to me, once, and again in a shriek, calling me her friend, and then, before I could do anything, driven by her own fears, had simply fled from the house.

Her friend! And I was the one who had brought her into the house, and had ignored her first cry for help! I was down the stairs in an instant, and out in the street. I looked up the slope of the hill; there was no one to be seen that way. The distance the other way, down to the Finchley Road, was only about fifty yards; I was sure she must have made for it, though I could not see her, and I ran down to the corner. It was hopeless. The pavements of Finchley Road were crowded with people, throngs of them, advancing and retreating, pausing, hurrying forward, turning aside; in the road itself trucks ground their gears, moved forward, stood idle, their exhaust fumes rising in the air. There wasn't a sign of the little girl. I ran half a block in one direction, turned and ran back in the other. She was gone, lost in the crowd. In the months that followed I looked for her many times, when the children gathered in groups outside the house before or after their lessons, but she was never among them.

## *IV*

I'M AFRAID I have no conclusion to these recollections. I lived as I have tried to describe for about four months; then, as a result of a visit to some South African friends who had settled in Yorkshire, and a visit, during the summer holidays, to others who had come to live in Cambridge, the circumstances of my life in London changed greatly—changed permanently, I might say. The period I've written about had no definable consequences: simply, it was what it was, while it lasted, and then it was over.

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If it left me with anything at all, it left me with questions rather than conclusions. I had hoped that somehow my life would be made more simple for me, in England; but precisely because I was so much attracted to the country, I saw quite clearly that in fact it had complicated things all the more. Now, whatever I was to do with myself, wherever I went, I knew that there would be one more term I would have to add to my guesses or calculations. One way or another, I wouldn't be able to shake England altogether from me; of that I was sure. But what I would do about this England with which I seemed now to be stuck, how I might live in it or why I might decide not to do so—these questions were merely presented to me, not answered.

And there were other questions about England—less personal, possibly, but puzzling and bewildering enough—that I was forced to ask myself. Overall, what had impressed me most about the English scene was its sheer *density*; by contrast, the South African scene, when I looked back on it, seemed not only new and bare, but haphazard, unformulated, uncertain, unrealised—its parts lacked style, lacked accommodation, lacked depth. Aware of the contrast, seeing and feeling it wherever I went in England, the question I had to ask myself about it was this: What difference does it make? Or rather, to be more precise: What moral difference does it make? Possessing this density, or being possessed by it, were the English, quite simply, better people? Were they more intelligent, did they make greater use of their own human potentialities, were they happier, were they deeper in feeling, more compassionate, more hopeful?

One answer was obvious. Clearly, people were people wherever they were; intelligence and stupidity, good and evil, did not have geographical locations. After all, I could travel just a very few miles eastwards and find myself in countries as ancient, as dense socially, as England, where just a few years previously I would have ended my life jammed into a chamber with hundreds like myself, gasping for air and breathing in Zyklon-B. We could fill more and more elaborately and densely the space we occupied, we could accumulate buildings and develop the most subtle and refined modes of expression; but we couldn't accumulate wisdom and generosity, we couldn't lift ourselves up from what we were. All that England, all that Europe, offered to someone like myself were certain æsthetic satisfactions which I could not have found at home. Though they gratified the eye and ear, the richness, fullness, and variety of England, which had come to me as such a revelation, did nothing and could do nothing to improve the minds or morals of individual Englishmen.

An obvious answer, I have said; but if I tried to realise its implications I was left feeling heartsick and cheated; I was left with the conviction that history was a malicious fraud, and that so was art. They both pretended to be so much more than mere spectacles, they hinted at meanings, purposes, resolutions; but the one stumbled and staggered from event to event, from disaster to disaster, recording everything and remembering nothing, always striving to accomplish the same ends, and always astonished by its miserable failure to do so; the other had not yet succeeded in lifting from us one item of the burden of confusion and ignorance we carried. Then what was the good of them? Or of having their accumulations around us? What help did they give us? Was the choice between an old country and a new one nothing but the choice between different kinds of amusement or diversion? And was one diverted always from the same horror of inertia, recurrence, and aimlessness beneath?

Yet, on another level, a different answer was as obvious as the first one I had given. England *was* a happier country than South Africa, a more gentle and hopeful country. And it seemed to me a great achievement that England should have managed to combine with its power so much benignity. Somehow, through a series of accidents and chances (and through the efforts, surely, of numberless individual Englishmen) something, it seemed, had been learned in England; something had been lifted, however insecurely and temporarily, above the wash and ebb of recurrence. What that "something" was I couldn't define, though I had many different words for it: endurance, concern, readiness, patience, restraint, earnestness. Whatever it was, the English found it difficult to take with them them when they went overseas; at home, another war or a time of hunger would overthrow it; even in times of peace and comparative plenty it was clear that the English themselves frequently resented having to live with it, and expressed their resentment in a meanness, a rancour, or an off-hand rudeness that were characteristically their own. And yet, it remained: a moral temper without which England would have been a different country—and the world I had my chance of living in a bleaker place.

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## *Günter Grass*

# *In the Onion Cellar*

### *From a Novel*

WE LOVED the Rhine meadows, and it so happened that Ferdinand Schmuh, the restaurant and night-spot owner, also loved the right bank of the Rhine between Düsseldorf and Kaiserswerth. We did most of our practising above Stockum. Meanwhile Schmuh, carrying a small-calibre rifle, searched the riverside hedges and bushes for sparrows. That was his hobby, his recreation. When business got on his nerves, Schmuh bade his wife take the wheel of the Mercedes; they would drive along the river, and park above Stockum. Slightly flat-footed, his rifle pointing at the ground, he set off across the meadows, followed by his wife who would rather have stayed in the car. At the end of their cross-country jaunt, he deposited her on a comfortable stone by the riverbank and vanished amid the hedges. We played our ragtime, he went pop pop in the bushes. While we made music, Schmuh shot sparrows.

When Scholle, who like Klepp knew every bar owner in town, heard shooting in the shrubbery, he announced:

"Schmuh is shooting sparrows."

Since Schmuh is no longer living, I may as well put in my obituary right here:

WHEN *Günter Grass' "Blechtrommel" (The Tin Drum) was published, it seemed to be the book that discriminating critics had been waiting for from the post-war generation of German writers. It became a best-seller, was awarded (and refused) prizes, prompted Osborne-like controversy and even boycott. It is a work of some six hundred pages, the first novel of a Danzig-born painter and poet (he wrote it in Paris and now lives in Berlin), an enormous, rude, bizarre eruption of a book, a monster novel in more ways than one. For this is the macabre and picaresque story of Oskar Matzerath and the tin drum he gets on his third birthday when growth stops. Are we supposed to see here in the symbol of a mis-shapen gnome, watched by a caretaker in an asylum, a picture of man to-day? There is an echo of Faust, but as farce; an echo too of Don Quixote, but centuries late, and too late for any dreamer or madman to hope to teach the world to be reasonable. Enemies of the novel have found it horrific ("grässlich": with no pun intended) and lamented how far German literature has come from Wilhelm Meister and Der Grüne Heinrich. Its admirers (especially in France) are enchanted with the landscape of Rabelais and Grimmelshausen, and as M. Maurice Nadeau said (praising Le Tambour), "the riches in the novel astonish and upset, especially when one has to think of all our little formal undertakings, so by comparison without scope or ambition...." There is Oskar outwitting the Nazis, at the front in Poland, surviving Hitler's war, turning to jazz in Adenauer's Germany as a member of the "Rhine River Three." He is perhaps a Satanic trouble-maker, yet there is heroism there, for the little drum takes on all the Goliaths of the world, and like David, wins victories (and David's slingshot was also after all a toy, a boy's plaything).*



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Schmuh was a good marksman and perhaps a good man as well; for when Schmuh went sparrow-shooting, he kept ammunition in the left-hand pocket of his coat, but his right-hand pocket was full of bird food, which he distributed among the sparrows with a generous sweeping movement, not before, but after he had done his shooting, and he never shot more than twelve birds in an afternoon.

One cool November morning in 1949, when Schmuh was still among the living and we for our part had been rehearsing for some weeks on the banks of the Rhine, he addressed us in a voice too loud and angry to be taken quite seriously: "How do you expect me to shoot birds when you scare them away with your music?"

"Oh," Klepp apologised, holding out his flute as though presenting arms. "You must be the gentleman with the superb sense of rhythm, whose shooting keeps such perfect time with our melodies. My respects, Herr Schmuh!"

Schmuh was pleased that Klepp knew him by name, but inquired how so. Klepp, with a show of indignation: Why, everybody knows Schmuh. In the street I can always hear somebody saying: There's Schmuh, there goes Schmuh, did you see Schmuh just now, where is Schmuh to-day, Schmuh is out shooting sparrows.

Thus transformed into a public figure, Schmuh offered us cigarettes, asked us our names, and requested a piece from our repertory. We obliged with a tiger rag, whereupon he called his wife who had been sitting in her fur coat on a stone, musing over the waters of the Rhine. Fur-coated, she joined us and again we played, this time it was *High Society*, and when we had finished, she said in her fur coat: "Why, Ferdy, that's just what you need for the cellar." He seemed to be of the same opinion; indeed, he was under the impression that he personally had gone scouting for us and found us. Nevertheless, Schmuh, pondering, maybe calculating, sent several flat stones skipping over the waters of the Rhine before he made his offer: would we play at the Onion Cellar from nine to two, for ten marks an evening apiece, well, let's say twelve? Klepp said seventeen in order that Schmuh might say fifteen; Schmuh said fourteen-fifty, and we called it a deal.

SEEN FROM THE STREET, the Onion Cellar looked like many of the newer night-clubs which are distinguished from the older bars and cabarets by, among other things, their higher prices. The higher prices were justified by the outlandish decoration of these night spots, many of which termed themselves "Artists' Clubs," and also by their names. There was *"The Ravioli Room"* (discreet and refined), *"The Taboo"* (mysterious and existentialist), *"The Paprika"* (spicy and high-spirited). And of course there was *"The Onion Cellar."*

The words "Onion Cellar" and a poignantly naïve likeness of an onion had been painted with deliberate awkwardness on an enamel sign which hung in the old German manner from elaborate wrought-iron gallows in front of the house. The one and only window was glassed with bottle-green bull's-eye panes. The iron door, painted with red lead, had no doubt seen service in a war-time air-raid shelter. Outside it stood the doorman in a rustic sheepskin. Not everyone was allowed in the Onion Cellar. Especially on Fridays when wages turn to beer, it was the doorman's business to turn away certain Old City characters, for whom the Onion Cellar was too expensive in the first place. Behind the red-lead door, those who were allowed in found five concrete steps. You went down, found yourself on a landing some three feet square, to which a poster for a Picasso show lent an original, artistic turn. Four more steps took you to the checkroom. "Please pay later," said a little cardboard sign, and indeed, the young man at the counter, usually an art student with a beard, refused to take money in advance, because the Onion Cellar was not only expensive but also and nevertheless high-class.

The owner in person welcomed every single guest with elaborate gestures and mobile expressive eyebrows, as though initiating him into a secret rite. As we know, the owner's name was Ferdinand Schmuh;



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he was a man who shot sparrows now and then, and had a keen eye for the society which had sprung up in Düsseldorf (and elsewhere, though not quite so quickly) since the currency reform.

The Onion Cellar—and here we see the note of authenticity essential to a successful night-club—was a real cellar; in fact, it was quite damp and chilly under foot. Tubular in shape, it measured roughly thirteen by sixty, and was heated by two authentic cast-iron stoves. Yet in one respect the Cellar wasn't a cellar after all. The ceiling had been taken off, so that the club actually included the former ground-floor apartment. The one and only window was not a real cellar window, but the former window of the ground-floor apartment. However, since one might have looked out of the window if not for its opaque bull's-eye panes; since there was a gallery that one reached by a highly original and highly precipitous staircase, the Onion Cellar can reasonably be termed "authentic," even if it was not a real cellar—and besides, why should it have been?

Oskar has forgotten to tell you that the staircase leading to the gallery was not a real staircase but more like a companionway ladder, because on either side of its dangerously steep steps there were two extremely original clothes-lines to hold on to; the staircase swayed a bit, making you think of an ocean voyage and adding to the price.

The Onion Cellar was lighted by acetylene lamps such as miners carry, and they broadcast a smell of carbide—again adding to the price—and transported the customer unto the gallery of a mine, a potash mine for instance, three thousand feet below the surface of the earth: cutters bare to the waist hack away at the rock, opening up a vein; the scraper hauls out the salt, the windlass roars as it fills the cars; far behind, where the gallery turns off to Friedrichshall Two, a swaying light; that's the head foreman and here he comes with a cheery hello, swinging a carbide lamp that looks exactly like the carbide lamps that hung from the unadorned, slapdashly whitewashed walls of the Onion Cellar, casting their light and smell, adding to the prices, and creating an original atmosphere.

The customers were uncomfortably seated on common crates, covered with onion sacks, yet the plank tables, scrubbed and spotless, recalled the guests from the mine to a peaceful peasant inn just like in the movies.

THAT WAS ALL. And the bar? No bar. Waiter, the menu please! Neither waiter nor menu. In fact, there was no one else but ourselves, the Rhine River Three. Klepp, Scholle, and Oskar sat beneath the staircase that was really a companionway. We arrived at nine, unpacked our instruments, and began to play at about ten. But for the present it is only a quarter past nine and I won't be able to speak about us until later. Right now let us keep an eye on Schmuh, who occasionally shot sparrows with a small-calibre rifle.

As soon as the Onion Cellar had filled up—half-full was regarded as full—Schmuh, the host, donned his shawl. This shawl had been specially made for him. It was cobalt-blue silk, printed with a golden-yellow pattern. I mention all this because the donning of the shawl was significant. The pattern printed on the shawl was made up of golden-yellow onions. The Onion Cellar was not really "open" until Schmuh had put on his shawl.

The customers—businessmen, doctors, lawyers, artists, journalists, theatre and movie people, well-known figures from the sporting world, officials in the provincial and municipal government, in short, a cross-section of the world which nowadays calls itself intellectual—came with wives, mistresses, secretaries, interior decorators, and occasional male mistresses, to sit on crates covered with burlap. Until Schmuh put on his golden-yellow onions, the conversation was subdued, forced, dispirited. These people wanted to talk, to unburden themselves, but they couldn't seem to get started; despite all their efforts, they left the essential unsaid, talked around it. Yet how eager they were to spill their guts, to talk from their

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hearts, their bowels, their entrails, to forget about their brains just this once, to lay bare the raw, unvarnished truth, the man within. Here and there a stifled remark about a botched career, a broken marriage. One gathers that the gentleman over there with the massive head, the intelligent face, and soft, almost delicate hands, is having trouble with his son, who is displeased about his father's past. Those two ladies in mink, who still look quite attractive in the light of the carbide lamp, claim to have lost their faith, but they don't say in what. So far we know nothing about the past of the gentleman with the massive head, nor have we the slightest idea what sort of trouble his son is making for him on account of this unknown past; if you'll forgive Oskar a crude metaphor, it was like laying eggs; you push and push. . . .

The pushing in the Onion Cellar brought meagre results until Schmuh appeared in his special shawl. Having been welcomed with a joyful "Ah!" for which he thanked his kind guests, he vanished for a few minutes behind a curtain at the end of the Onion Cellar, where the toilets and storeroom were situated.

But why did a still more joyous "Ah," an "Ah" of relief and release, welcome the host on his reappearance? The proprietor of a successful night-club disappears behind a curtain, takes something from the storeroom, flings a choice selection of insults in an undertone at the washroom attendant who is sitting there reading an illustrated weekly, reappears in front of the curtain, and is welcomed like the Saviour or like some legendary uncle from abroad.

Schmuh came back with a little basket on his arm and moved among the guests. The basket was covered with a blue-and-yellow checkered napkin. On the cloth lay a considerable number of little wooden boards, shaped like pigs or fish. These he handed out to his guests with little bows and compliments which showed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he had grown up in Budapest and Vienna; Schmuh's smile was like the smile on a copy of a copy of the supposedly authentic Mona Lisa.

The guests, however, looked very serious as they took their little boards. Some exchanged boards with their neighbours, for some preferred the silhouette of a pig, while others preferred the more mysterious fish. They sniffed at the pieces of wood and moved them about. Schmuh, after serving the customers in the gallery, waited until all the little boards had come to rest.

Then—and every heart was waiting—he removed the napkin, very much in the manner of a magician: beneath it lay still another napkin, upon which, almost unrecognisable at first glance, lay the paring knives.

These too he proceeded to hand out. But this time he made his rounds more quickly, whipping up the tension that permitted him to raise his prices; he paid no more compliments, and left no time for any exchanges of knives; a calculated haste entered into his movements. "On your mark, get set," he shouted. At "Go" he tore the napkin off the basket, reached into the basket and handed out, dispensed, distributed among the multitude . . . onions—onions such as were represented, golden-yellow and slightly stylised, on his shawl, plain ordinary onions, not tulip bulbs, but onions such as women buy in the market, such as the vegetable woman sells, such as the peasant, the peasant's wife, or the hired girl plant and harvest, onions such as may be seen more or less faithfully portrayed in the still-lifes of the lesser Dutch masters. Such onions, then, Schmuh dispensed among his guests until each had an onion and no sound could be heard but the purring of the stoves and the whistling of the carbide lamps. For the grand distribution of onions was followed by silence. Into which Ferdinand Schmuh cried: *"Bittschön, die Herrschafften!"* And he tossed one end of his shawl over his left shoulder like a skier just before the start. This was the signal.

THE GUESTS peeled the onions. Onions are said to have seven skins. The ladies and gentlemen peeled the onions with the paring knives. They removed the first, third, blond, golden-yellow, rust-brown, or better

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still, onion-coloured skin, they peeled until the onion became glassy, green, whitish, damp and water-sticky, until it smelled, smelled like an onion. Then they cut it as one cuts onions, deftly or clumsily, on the little chopping boards shaped like pigs or fish; they cut in one direction and another until the juice spurted or turned to vapour—the older gentlemen were not very handy with paring knives and had to be careful not to cut their fingers; some cut themselves even so, but didn't notice it—the ladies were more skilful, not all of them, but those at least who were housewives at home, who knew how one cuts up onions for hash-brown potatoes, or for liver with apples and onion rings; but in Schmuh's onion cellar there was neither, there was nothing whatever to eat, and anyone who wanted to eat had to go elsewhere, to the *Fischl*, for instance, for at the *Onion Cellar* onions were only cut. Why all these onions? For one thing, because of the name. *The Onion Cellar* had its specialty: onions. And moreover, the onion, the cut onion, when you look at it closely . . . but enough of that, Schmuh's guests had stopped looking, they could see nothing more, because their eyes were running over and not because their hearts were so full. For it is not true that when the heart is full the eyes necessarily overflow: some people can never manage it, especially in our century, which will surely be known to posterity as the tearless century in spite of all the suffering and sorrow. It was this drought, this tearlessness that brought those who could afford it to Schmuh's *Onion Cellar*, where the host handed them a little chopping board—pig or fish—an eighty-pfennig paring knife, and an ordinary field-, garden-, and kitchen-variety onion for twelve marks, and induced them to cut their onions smaller and smaller until the juice—what did the onion juice do? It did what the world and the sorrows of the world could not do: it brought forth a round, human tear. It made them cry. At last they were able to cry again. To cry properly, without restraint, to cry like mad. The tears flowed and washed everything away. The rain came. The dew. Oskar has a vision of floodgates opening. Of dams bursting in the spring floods. What is the name of that river that overflows every spring and the government does nothing to stop it?

After this cataclysm at twelve marks eighty, human beings who have had a good cry, open their mouths to speak. Still hesitant, startled by the nakedness of their own words, the weepers poured out their hearts to their neighbours on the uncomfortable, burlap-covered crates, submitted to questioning, let themselves be turned inside-out like overcoats. But Oskar, who with Klepp and Scholle sat tearless behind the staircase, will be discreet; from among all the disclosures, self-accusations, confessions that fell on his ears, he will relate only the story of Fräulein Pioch, who lost her Herr Vollmer many times over, so acquiring a strong heart and a tearless eye, which necessitated frequent visits to Schmuh's *Onion Cellar*.

We met, said Fräulein Pioch when she had finished crying, in the streetcar. I had just come from the store—she owns and runs an excellent bookstore. The car was full and Willy—that's Herr Vollmer—stepped on my right foot. He stepped on it so hard that I couldn't stand on it any more, and we loved each other at first sight. I couldn't walk either, so he offered me his arm, escorted, or rather carried, me home, and from that day on he took loving care of the toenail which had turned black and blue under his heel. He loved me, not just my toe, until the toe-nail came loose from its toe—the right big toe—and there was nothing to prevent a new toe-nail from growing in. The day the dead toe-nail fell, his love began to cool. Both of us were miserable about it. It was then that Willy—he still cared for me in a way and, besides, we had so much in common—had his terrible idea. Let me, he pleaded, trample your left big toe until the nail turns a light, then a darker purple. I consented and he trampled. Again he loved me with his whole being, and his love endured until my big toe-nail, the left one it was, fell away like a withered leaf; and then it was autumn again for our love. Willy wanted to start in again

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on my right big toe, the nail had meanwhile grown in again. But I wouldn't let him. If your love for me is really so overpowering, I said, it ought to outlast a toenail. He couldn't seem to understand. He left me. Months later, we met at a concert. The seat beside me happened to be unoccupied and after the intermission he sat down in it. They were doing the Ninth Symphony. When the chorus started up, I removed the shoe from my right foot and held the foot out in front of him. He stepped on it with might and main, but I didn't do anything to interfere with the concert. Seven weeks later Willy left me again. We had two more brief reprieves; twice more I held out my toe, first the left one, then the right one. To-day both my toes are maimed. The nails won't grow in again. From time to time Willy comes to see me; shaken, full of pity for me and for himself, he sits at my feet on the rug and stares, unloving and unweeping, at the two nailless victims of our love. Sometimes I say: Come along, Willy, let's go to Schmuh's *Onion Cellar* and have a good cry. But so far he has refused to come. What the poor soul must suffer without the consolation of tears!

Later—this Oskar relates only to satisfy the curious among you—Herr Vollmer—he sold radios, I might mention in passing—did come to our Cellar. They cried together and it seems, as Klepp told me yesterday in visiting hour, that they have just been married.

It was from Tuesday to Saturday—the *Onion Cellar* was closed on Sunday—that the onion brought the more basic tragedies of human existence welling to the surface. But the most violent weeping was done on Mondays, when our cellar was patronised by the younger set. On Monday Schmuh served onions to students at half price. The most frequent guests were medical and pre-medical students—of both sexes. Quite a few art students as well, particularly among those who were planning to teach drawing later on, spent a portion of their stipends on onions. But where, I have wondered ever since, did the boys and girls in their last year of high school get the money for onions?

Young people have a different way of crying. They have entirely different problems from their elders, but this doesn't mean that examinations are their only source of anguish. Oh, what conflicts between father and son, mother and daughter, were aired in the *Onion Cellar*! A good many of the young people felt that they were not understood, but most of them were used to it; nothing to cry about. Oskar was glad to see that love, and not just sexual frustration, could still wring tears from the young folks. Gerhard and Gudrun, for instance.

At first they sat downstairs; it was only later that they wept side by side in the gallery. She, large and muscular, a handball player and student of chemistry. She wore her hair over her neck in a big bun. Most of the time she looked straight ahead of her out of grey, motherly eyes, a clean, forthright gaze that reminded me of the *Frauenschaft* posters during the war.

In spite of her fine forehead, smooth, milky-white, and radiant with health, her face was her misfortune. Her cheeks and her round, firm chin down to her Adam's apple bore the distressing traces of a vigorous growth of beard that the poor thing kept trying in vain to shave off. Her sensitive skin reacted violently to the razor blade. Gudrun wept for her red, cracked, pimply complexion, she wept for the beard that kept growing back in. They had not met in the streetcar like Fräulein Pioch and Herr Vollmer, but in the train. He was sitting opposite her, they were both on their way back from their between-semesters vacation. He loved her instantly in spite of the beard. She, because of her beard, was afraid to love him, but was full of admiration for what to him was his misfortune, his chin, which was as smooth and beardless as a baby's bottom, and made him bashful in the presence of girls. Nevertheless, Gerhard spoke to Gudrun, and by the time they left the train at the Düsseldorf station, they were friends at least. After that they saw each other every day. They spoke of this and that, and shared a good part of their thoughts, but never

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alluded to the beard that was missing or the beard that was all too present. Gerhard was considerate of Gudrun; knowing that her skin was sensitive, he never kissed her. Their love remained chaste, though neither of them set much store by chastity, for she was interested in chemistry and he was studying medicine. When a friend suggested the *Onion Cellar*, they smiled contemptuously with the scepticism characteristic of chemists and doctors. But finally they went, for purposes of documentation, as they assured each other. Never has Oskar seen young people cry so. They came time and time again; they went without food to save up the six marks forty it cost them, and wept about the beard that was absent and the beard that devastated the soft, maidenly skin. Sometimes they tried to stay away from the *Onion Cellar*. One Monday they didn't come, but the following Monday they were back again. Rubbing the chopped onion between their fingers, they admitted that they had tried to save the six marks forty; they had tried doing it by themselves in her room with a cheap onion, but it wasn't the same. You needed an audience. It was so much easier to cry in company. It gave you a real sense of brotherhood in sorrow when to the right and left of you and in the gallery overhead your fellow students were all crying their hearts out.

This was another case in which the *Onion Cellar* bestowed not only tears but also, little by little, a cure. Apparently the tears washed away their inhibitions and brought them, as the saying goes, closer together. He kissed her tortured cheeks, she fondled his smooth chin, and one day they stopped coming to the *Onion Cellar*; they didn't need it any more. Oskar met them months later in Königs-Allee. He didn't recognise them at first. He, the glabrous Gerhard, sported a waving, reddish-blond beard; she, the prickly Gudrun, had barely a slight dark fuzz on her upper lip, very becoming to her. Her chin and cheeks were smooth, radiant, free from vegetation. Still studying but happily married, a student couple. Oskar can hear them in fifty years talking to their grandchildren; she, Gudrun: "That was long ago, before Grandpa had his beard." And he, Gerhard: "That was in the days when your Grandma was having trouble with her beard and we went to the *Onion Cellar* every Monday."

BUT TO WHAT PURPOSE, you may ask, are three musicians still sitting under the companionway or staircase ladder? What use had the onion shop, what with all this weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for a regular, and regularly paid, band?

Once the customers had finished crying and unburdening themselves, we took up our instruments and provided a musical transition to normal, everyday conversation. We made it easy for the guests to leave the *Onion Cellar* and make room for more guests. Klepp, Scholle, and Oskar were not personally lovers of onions. Besides, there was a clause in our contract, forbidding us to "use" onions in the same way as the guests. We had no need of them anyway. Scholle, the guitarist, had no ground for sorrow, he always seemed happy and contented, even when two strings on his banjo snapped at once in the middle of a rag. As to Klepp, the very concepts of crying and laughing are to this day unclear to him. Tears make him laugh; I have never seen anyone laugh as hard as Klepp did at the funeral of the aunt who used to wash his shirts and socks before he got married. But what of Oskar? Oskar had plenty of ground for tears. Mightn't he have used a few tears to wash away Sister Dorothea and that long, futile night spent on a still longer cocoanut-fibre runner? And my Maria? There is no doubt that she gave me cause enough for grief. Didn't Stenzel, her boss, come and go as he pleased in the flat in Bilk? Hadn't Kurt, my son, taken to calling the grocery-store owner first "Uncle Stenzel" and then "Papa Stenzel?" And what of those who lay in the far-away sand of Saspe cemetery or in the clay at Brenntau: my poor mama, the foolish and lovable Jan Bronski, and Matzerath, the cook who knew how to transform feelings into soups? All of them needed to be wept for. But Oskar was one of the fortunate who could still weep without onions.

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My drum helped me. Just a few, very special measures were all it took to make Oskar melt into tears that were no better or worse than the expensive tears of the *Onion Cellar*.

As for Schmuh, the proprietor, he, too, never touched his onions. In his case the sparrows he shot out of hedges and bushes in his free time filled the bill. Sometimes, after shooting, Schmuh would line up his twelve dead sparrows on a newspaper, shed tears over the little bundles of feathers before they even had time to grow cold, and, still weeping, strew bird food over the Rhine meadows and the pebbles by the water. In the Cellar he had still another outlet for his sorrow. He had got into the habit of giving the washroom attendant a ferocious tongue-lashing once a week, making more and more use of archaic expressions like "slut," "miserable strumpet," "blasted old harridan." "Out of my sight!" we could hear him bellow, "Despicable Monster! You're fired!" He would dismiss his victim without notice and hire a new one. But soon he ran into difficulty, there were no washroom attendants left. There was nothing for it but to hire back those he had previously fired. They were only too glad to accept; most of Schmuh's insults didn't mean much to them anyway, and they made good money. The guests at the *Onion Cellar*—an effect of so much weeping, no doubt—made exorbitant use of the facilities, and moreover *homo lacrimans* tends to be more generous than his dry-eyed counterpart. Especially the gentlemen who, after begging leave in voices choked with tears to step out for a minute, could be counted on to reach deep into their purses. Another source of income for the washroom attendant was the sale of the famous onion-print handkerchiefs inscribed with the legend: *"In the Onion Cellar."* They sold like hot cakes, for when they were no longer needed to wipe the eyes with they made attractive souvenirs and could be worn on the head. They could also be made into pennants which the habitués of the *Onion Cellar* would hang in the rear window of their cars, so bearing the fame of Schmuh's *Onion Cellar*, in vacation time, to Paris, the Côte d'Azur, Rome, Ravenna, Rimini, and even remote Spain.

WE MUSICIANS and our music had still another function. Occasionally some of the guests would partake of two onions in quick succession; the result was an outbreak that might easily have degenerated into an orgy. Schmuh insisted on a certain restraint; when gentlemen began taking off their ties and ladies undoing their blouses, he would order us to step in with our music and counteract the stirrings of lewdness. However, Schmuh himself was largely responsible for these ticklish situations, with his insidious habit of serving up a second onion to particularly vulnerable customers.

The most spectacular outburst I can recall was to influence Oskar's whole career, though I shall not go so far as to speak of a crucial turning-point. Schmuh's wife, the vivacious Billy, did not come to the Cellar very often, and when she did, it was in the company of friends to whom Schmuh was far from partial. One night she turned up with Woode, the music critic, and Wackerlei, the architect and pipe-smoker. Both of them were regular customers, but their sorrows were of the most boring variety. Woode wept for religious reasons—he was always being converted or reconverted to something or other; as for Wackerlei, the pipe-smoker, he was still bewailing a professorship he had turned down in the 'twenties for the sake of a little Danish fly-by-night, who had gone and married a South American and had six children by him, which was still a source of grief to Wackerlei and would make his pipe go out year after year. It was the somewhat malicious Woode who persuaded Frau Schmuh to cut into an onion. She cut, the tears flowed, and she began to open up. She exposed old Schmuh, told stories about him that Oskar will tactfully pass over in silence; it took several of the more powerful customers to prevent Schmuh from flinging himself on his spouse; don't forget that there were paring knives on every table. In any case, Schmuh was forcibly restrained until the indiscreet Billy could slip

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away with her friends Woode and Wackerlei.

Schmuh was very upset. I could see that by the way his hands flew about arranging and rearranging his onion shawl. Several times he vanished behind the curtain and reviled the washroom attendant. Finally he came back with a full basket and informed his guests in a tone of hysterical glee that he, Schmuh, was in a generous mood and was going to hand out a free round of onions. Which he proceeded to do.

Every human situation, however painful, strikes Klepp as a terrific joke, but on this occasion he was tense and held his flute at the ready. For we knew how dangerous it was to offer these high-strung people a double portion of tears, of the tears that wash away barriers.

Schmuh saw that we were holding our instruments in readiness and forbade us to play. At the tables the paring knives were at work. The beautiful outer skins, coloured like rosewood, were thrust heedlessly aside. The knives bit into vitreous onion flesh with pale-green stripes. Oddly enough, the weeping did not begin with the ladies. Gentlemen in their prime—the owner of a large flour mill, a hotel owner with his slightly rouged young friend, a nobleman high in the councils of an important business firm, a whole tableful of men's-clothing manufacturers who were in town for a board meeting, the bald actor who was known in the Cellar as the Gnasher, because he gnashed his teeth when he wept—all were in tears before the ladies joined in. But neither the ladies nor the gentlemen wept the tears of deliverance and release that the first onion had called forth; this was a frantic, convulsive crying jag. The Gnasher gnashed his teeth bloodcurdlingly; had he been on the stage, the whole audience would have joined in; the mill owner banged his carefully groomed grey head on the table-top; the hotel owner mingled his convulsions with those of his delicate young friend. Schmuh, who stood by the stairs, let his shawl droop and peered with malicious satisfaction at the near-unleashed company. Suddenly, a lady of ripe years tore off her blouse before the eyes of her son-in-law. The hotel owner's young friend, whose slightly exotic look had already been remarked on, bared his swarthy torso, and leaping from table-top to table-top performed a dance which exists perhaps somewhere in the Orient. The orgy was under way. But despite the violence with which it began, it was a dull, uninspired affair, hardly worth describing in detail.

Schmuh was disappointed; even Oskar lifted his eyebrows in disgust. One or two cute strip-tease acts; men appeared in ladies' underwear, Amazons donned ties and braces; a couple or two disappeared under the table, the Gnasher chewed up a brassière and apparently swallowed some of it.

The hubbub was frightful, wows and yippees with next to nothing behind them. At length Schmuh, disgusted and maybe fearing the police, left his post by the stairs, bent down over us, gave first Klepp, then me a poke, and hissed: "Music! Play something, for God's sake! Make them stop!"

But it turned out that Klepp, who was easy to please, was enjoying himself. Shaking with laughter, he couldn't do a thing with his flute. Scholle, who looked on Klepp as his master, imitated everything Klepp did, including his laughter. Only Oskar was left —but Schmuh could rely on me. I pulled my drum from under the bench, nonchalantly lit a cigarette, and began to drum.

Without any notion of what I was going to do, I made myself understood. I forgot all about the usual café concert routine. Nor did Oskar play jazz. For one thing I didn't like to be taken for a percussion maniac. All right, I was a good drummer, but not a hepcat. Sure, I like jazz, but I like Viennese waltzes too. I could play both, but I didn't have to. When Schmuh asked me to step in with my drum, I didn't play anything I had ever learned, I played with my heart. It was a three-year-old Oskar who picked up those drumsticks. I drummed my way back, I drummed up the world as a three-year-old sees it. And the first thing I did to these postwar humans incapable of a real orgy, was to put a harness on them: I led them to Posadowski-Weg, to Tante Kauer's kinder-

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garten. Soon I had their jaws hanging down; they took each other by the hands, turned their toes in, and waited for me, their Pied Piper. I left my post under the staircase and took the lead. "Bake, bake, bake a cake": that was my first sample. When I had registered my success—childlike merriment on every hand—I decided to scare them out of their wits. "Where's the Witch, black as pitch?" I drummed. And I drummed up the wicked black Witch who gave me an occasional fright in my childhood days and in recent years has terrified me more and more; I made her rage through the *Onion Cellar* in all her gigantic, coal-black frightfulness, so obtaining the results for which Schmuh required onions; *die Damen und Herren* wept great round, childlike tears, they were scared pink and green; their teeth chattered, they begged me to have mercy. And so, to comfort them, and in part to help them back into their outer and undergarments, their silks and satins, I drummed: "Green, green, green is my raiment" and "Red, red, red is my raiment," not to mention "Blue, blue, blue . . ." and "Yellow, yellow, yellow." By the time I had gone through all the more familiar colours, my charges were all properly dressed. Thereupon I formed them into a procession, led them through the *Onion Cellar* as though it were Jeschkentaler Weg. I led them up the Erbsberg, round the hideous Gutenberg Monument, and on the Johannis-Wiese grew daisies which they, *die Damen und Herren*, were free to pick in innocent merriment. Then, at last, wishing to give all those present, including Schmuh the head man, something by which to remember their day in kindergarten, I gave them all permission to do number one. We were approaching Devil's Gulch, a sinister place it was, gathering beechnuts, when I said on my drum: now, children, you may go. And they availed themselves of the opportunity. All the *Damen und Herren*, Schmuh the host, even the far-off washroom attendant, all the little children wet themselves, psss, psss they went, they all crouched down and listened to the sound they were making and they all wet their pants. It was only when the music had died down—Oskar had left the infant sound effects to themselves except for a soft distant roll—that I ushered in unrestrained merriment with one loud, emphatic boom. All about me the company roared, tittered, babbled childish nonsense:

*Break a little windowpane*
*Put sugar in your beer,*
*Frau Biddle plays the fiddle,*
*Dear, dear, dear—*

I led them to the cloakroom, where a bewildered student gave Schmuh's kindergarten their wraps; then, with the familiar ditty: "Hard-working washerwomen scrubbing out the clothes," I drummed them up the concrete steps, past the doorman in the rustic sheepskin. I dismissed the kindergarten beneath the night sky of spring, 1950, a trifle cool perhaps, but studded with fairy-tale stars, as though made to order for the occasion. Forgetful of home, they continued for quite some time to make childish mischief in the Old Town, until at length the police helped them to remember their age, social position, and telephone number.

As for me, I giggled and caressed my drum as I went back to the *Onion Cellar*, where Schmuh was still clapping his hands, still standing bow-legged and wet beside the staircase, seemingly as happy in Tante Kauer's kindergarten as on the Rhine Meadows when a grown-up Schmuh went shooting sparrows.

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*Karl R. Popper*

# On the Sources of Knowledge and of Ignorance

*It follows, therefore, that truth manifests itself . . .* BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA

*. . . it is impossible for us to* think *of any thing, which we have not antecedently* felt, *either by our external or internal senses.* DAVID HUME

MY TITLE is likely, I fear, to offend some critical eyes. For although "Sources of Knowledge" is in order, and "Sources of Error" would have been in order too, the phrase "Sources of Ignorance" is another matter. "Ignorance is something negative: it is the absence of knowledge. But how on earth can the absence of anything have sources?"[1] This question was put to me by a friend when I confided to him the title I had chosen; I was a little shaken by this for I had been, I confess, quite pleased. Hard pressed for a reply I found myself improvising a rationalisation, and explaining that the curious linguistic effect of the title was actually intended. I told him that I hoped to direct attention, through the phrasing of this title, to a number of historically important although unrecorded philosophical doctrines and among them, especially, to a *conspiracy theory of ignorance* which interprets ignorance not as a mere lack of knowledge but as the work of some mischievous power, the source of impure and evil influences which pervert and poison our minds and instil in us the habit of resistance to knowledge.

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The problem which I wish to examine afresh, and which I hope not only to examine but to solve, may perhaps be described as an aspect of the old quarrel between the British and the Continental schools of philosophy—the quarrel between the classical empiricism of Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Mill, and the classical rationalism or intellectualism of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. In this quarrel, the British school insisted that the ultimate source of all knowledge was observation, while the Continental school insisted that it was the intellectual intuition of clear and distinct ideas.

Most of these issues are still very much alive. Not only has empiricism, still the ruling doctrine in England, conquered the United States, but it is now widely accepted even on the European Continent as the true theory of *scientific* knowledge. Cartesian intellectualism, alas, has been only too often distorted into one or another of the various forms of modern irrationalism.

I shall try to show that the differences between classical empiricism and rationalism are much smaller than their similarities, and that both are mistaken. I hold that they are mistaken although I am myself both an empiricist and a rationalist of sorts. But I believe that, though observation and reason have each an important role to play, these roles hardly resemble those which their classical defenders attributed to

[1] Descartes and Spinoza went even further, and asserted that not only ignorance but also error is "something negative"—a "privation" of knowledge, and even of the proper use of our freedom. Nevertheless, they speak also of the "cause" of falsity (or error).



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them. More especially, I shall try to show that neither observation nor reason can be described as a source of knowledge, in the sense in which they have been claimed to be sources of knowledge, down to the present day.

OUR PROBLEM BELONGS to the theory of knowledge, or to epistemology, reputed to be the most abstract and remote and altogether irrelevant region of pure philosophy. Hume, for example, one of the greatest thinkers in the field, predicted that, because of the remoteness and abstractness and practical irrelevance of some of his results, none of his readers would believe in them for more than an hour.

Kant's attitude was different. He thought that the problem "What can I know?" was one of the three most important questions a man could ask. Bertrand Russell, in spite of being closer to Hume in philosophic temperament, seems to side in this matter with Kant. And I believe that Russell is right when he attributes to epistemology practical consequences for science, for ethics, and even for politics. He points out, for example, that epistemological relativism, or the idea that there is no such thing as objective truth, and epistemological pragmatism, or the idea that truth is the same as usefulness, are closely linked with authoritarian and totalitarian ideas.

Russell's views are of course disputed. Some recent philosophers have developed a doctrine of the essential impotence and practical irrelevance of all genuine philosophy, and thus, one can assume, of epistemology. Philosophy, they say, cannot by its very nature have any significant consequences, and so it can influence neither science nor politics. But I think that ideas are dangerous and powerful things, and that even philosophers have sometimes produced ideas. Indeed, I have no doubt that this new doctrine of the impotence of all philosophy is amply refuted by the facts.

The situation is really very simple. The belief of a liberal—the belief in the possibility of a rule of law, of equal justice, of fundamental rights, and a free society—can easily survive the recognition that judges are not omniscient and may make mistakes about facts and that, in practice, absolute justice is hardly ever realised in any particular legal case. But this belief in the possibility of a rule of law, of justice, and of freedom, can hardly survive the acceptance of an epistemology which teaches that there are no objective facts; not merely in this particular case, but in any other case; and that the judge cannot have made a factual mistake because he can no more be wrong about the facts than he can be right.

THE GREAT MOVEMENT of liberation which started in the Renaissance and led through the many vicissitudes of the reformation and the religious and revolutionary wars to the free societies in which the English-speaking peoples are privileged to live, this movement was inspired throughout by an unparalleled epistemological optimism: by a most optimistic view of man's power to discern truth and to acquire knowledge.

At the heart of this new optimistic view of the possibility of knowledge lies the doctrine that *truth is manifest*. Truth may perhaps be veiled. But it may reveal itself. And if it does not reveal itself, it may be revealed by us. Removing the veil may not be easy. But once the naked truth stands revealed before our eyes, we have the power to see it, to distinguish it from falsehood, and to know that it *is* truth.

The birth of modern science and modern technology was inspired by this optimistic epistemology whose main spokesmen were Bacon and Descartes. They taught that there was no need for any man to appeal to authority in matters of truth because each man carried the sources of knowledge in himself; either in his power of sense-perception which he may use for the careful observation of nature, or in his power of intellectual intuition which he may use to distinguish truth from falsehood by refusing to accept any idea which is not clearly and distinctly perceived by the intellect.

*Man can know: thus he can be free.* This is the formula which explains the link between epistemological optimism and the ideas of liberalism.

This link is paralleled by the opposite link. Disbelief in the power of human reason, in man's power to discern the truth, is almost invariably linked with distrust of man. Thus epistemological pessimism is linked, historically, with a doctrine of human depravity, and it tends to lead to the demand for the establishment of powerful traditions and the entrenchment of a powerful authority which would save man from his folly and his wickedness. (There is a striking sketch of this theory of authoritarianism, and a picture of the burden carried by those in authority, in the story of *The Grand Inquisitor* in Dostoievsky's *Brothers Karamazov*.)

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The contrast between epistemological pessimism and optimism may be said to be fundamentally the same as that between epistemological traditionalism and rationalism. (I am using the latter term in its wider sense in which it is opposed to irrationalism, and in which it covers not only Cartesian intellectualism but empiricism also.) For we can interpret traditionalism as the belief that, in the absence of an objective and discernible truth, we are faced with the choice between accepting the authority of tradition, and chaos; while rationalism has, of course, always claimed the right of reason and of empirical science to criticise, and to reject, any tradition, and any authority, as being based on sheer unreason or prejudice or accident.

IT IS A DISTURBING FACT that even an abstract study like pure epistemology is not as pure as one might think (and as Aristotle believed) but that its ideas may, to a large extent, be motivated and unconsciously inspired by political hopes and by Utopian dreams. This should be a warning to the epistemologist. What can he do about it? As an epistemologist I have only one interest—to find out the truth about the problems of epistemology, whether or not this truth fits in with my political ideas. But am I not liable to be influenced, unconsciously, by my political hopes and beliefs?

It so happens that I am not only an empiricist and a rationalist of sorts but also a liberal; but just because I am a liberal, I feel that few things are more important for a liberal than to submit the various theories of liberalism to the most searching and critical examination.

While I was engaged in a critical examination of this kind I discovered the part played by certain epistemological theories in the development of liberal ideas; and especially by the various forms of epistemological optimism. And I found that, as an epistemologist, I had to reject these epistemological theories as untenable. This experience of mine may illustrate the point that our dreams and our hopes need not necessarily control our results, and that, in searching for the truth, it may be our best plan to start by criticising our most cherished beliefs. This may seem to some a perverse plan. But it will not seem so to those who want to find the truth and are not afraid of it.

IN EXAMINING THE optimistic epistemology inherent in certain ideas of liberalism, I found a cluster of doctrines which, although often accepted implicitly, have not, to my knowledge, been explicitly discussed or even noticed by philosophers or historians. The most fundamental of them is one which I have already mentioned—the doctrine that truth is manifest. The strangest of them is the conspiracy theory of ignorance, which is a curious outgrowth from the doctrine of manifest truth.

By the doctrine that truth is manifest I mean the optimistic view that truth, if put before us naked, is always recognisable as truth. Thus truth, if it does not reveal itself, has only to be unveiled, or dis-covered. Once this is done, there is no need for further argument. We have been given eyes to see the truth, and the "natural light" of reason to see it by.

This doctrine is at the heart of the teaching of both Descartes and Bacon. Descartes based his optimistic epistemology on the important theory of the *veracitas dei*. What we clearly and distinctly see to be true must indeed be true; for otherwise God would be deceiving us. Thus the truthfulness of God must make truth manifest.

In Bacon we have a similar doctrine. It might be described as the doctrine of the *veracitas naturae*, the truthfulness of Nature. Nature is an open book. He who reads it with a pure mind cannot misread it. Only if his mind is poisoned by prejudice can he fall into error.

This last remark shows that the doctrine that truth is manifest creates the need to explain falsehood. Knowledge, the possession of truth, need not be explained. But how can we ever fall into error if truth is manifest? The answer is: through our own sinful refusal to see the manifest truth; or because our minds harbour prejudices inculcated by education and tradition, or other evil influences which have perverted our originally pure and innocent minds. Ignorance may be the work of powers conspiring to keep us in ignorance, to poison our minds by filling them with falsehood, and to blind our eyes so that they cannot see the manifest truth. Such prejudices and such powers, then, are sources of ignorance.

The conspiracy theory of ignorance is fairly well known in its Marxian form as the conspiracy of a capitalist press that perverts and suppresses truth and fills the workers' minds with false ideologies. Prominent among these, of course, are the doctrines of religion. It is surprising to find how unoriginal this Marxist theory is. The wicked and fraudulent priest who

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keeps the people in ignorance was a stock figure of the 18th century and, I am afraid, one of the inspirations of liberalism. It can be traced back to the protestant belief in the conspiracy of the Roman Church, and also to the beliefs of those dissenters who held similar views about the Established Church.

This curious belief in a conspiracy is the almost inevitable consequence of the optimistic belief that truth, and therefore goodness, must prevail if only truth is given a fair chance.

> "Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?" (*Areopagitica*).

So when Milton's Truth was put to the worse, the necessary inference was that the encounter had not been free and open: if the manifest truth does not prevail, it must have been maliciously suppressed. One can see that an attitude of tolerance which is based upon an optimistic faith in the victory of truth may easily be shaken. For it is liable to turn into a conspiracy theory which would be hard to reconcile with an attitude of tolerance.

I do not assert that there was never a grain of truth in this conspiracy theory. But in the main it was a myth, just as the theory of manifest truth from which it grew was a myth.

For the simple truth is that truth is often hard to come by, and that once found it may easily be lost again. Erroneous beliefs may have an astonishing power to survive, for thousands of years, in defiance of experience, and without the aid of any conspiracy. The history of science, and especially of medicine, could furnish us with a number of good examples. One example is, indeed, the general conspiracy theory itself. I mean the erroneous view that whenever something evil happens it must be due to the evil will of an evil power. Various forms of this view have survived down to our own day.

Thus the optimistic epistemology of Bacon and of Descartes cannot be true. Yet perhaps the strangest thing in this story is that this false epistemology was the major inspiration of an intellectual and moral revolution without parallel in history. It encouraged men to think for themselves. It gave them hope that through knowledge they might free themselves and others from servitude and misery. It made modern science possible. It became the basis of the fight again censorship and the suppression of free thought. It became the basis of the nonconformist conscience, of individualism, and of a new sense of man's dignity; of a demand for universal education, and of a new dream of a free society. It made men feel responsible for themselves and for others, and eager to improve not only their own condition but also that of their fellow men. It is a case of a bad idea inspiring many good ones.

THIS FALSE EPISTEMOLOGY, however, has also led to disastrous consequences. The theory that truth is manifest—that it is there for everyone to see, if only he wants to see it—this theory is the basis of almost every kind of fanaticism. For only the most depraved wickedness can refuse to see the manifest truth; only those who have every reason to fear truth can deny it, and conspire to suppress it.

Yet the theory that truth is manifest not only breeds fanatics—men possessed by the conviction that all those who do not see the manifest truth must be possessed by the devil—but it may also lead, though perhaps less directly than does a pessimistic epistemology, to authoritarianism. This is so, simply, because truth is not manifest, as a rule. The allegedly manifest truth is therefore in constant need, not only of interpretation and affirmation, but also of re-interpretation and re-affirmation. An authority is required to pronounce upon, and lay down, almost from day to day, what is to be the manifest truth, and it may learn to do so arbitrarily and cynically. So many disappointed epistemologists will turn away from their own former optimism and erect a resplendent authoritarian theory on the basis of a pessimistic epistemology. It seems to me that the greatest epistemologist of all, Plato, exemplifies this tragic development.

PLATO PLAYS A DECISIVE part in the pre-history of Descartes' doctrine of the *veracitas dei*—the doctrine that our intellectual intuition does not deceive us because God is truthful and will not deceive us; or in other words, the doctrine that our intellect is a source of knowledge because God is a source of knowledge. This doctrine has a long history which can easily be traced back at least to Homer and Hesiod.

To us, the habit of referring to one's sources would seem natural in a scholar or an historian, and it is perhaps a little surprising to find that this habit stems from the poets; but it does. The Greek poets refer to the sources of their knowledge. The sources are divine. They are the

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Muses. "... the Greek bards," Gilbert Murray observes in *The Rise of the Greek Epic*,

> always owe, not only what we should call their inspiration, but their actual knowledge of facts to the Muses. The Muses "are present and know all things" ... Hesiod always explains that he is dependent on the Muses for his knowledge. Other sources of knowledge are indeed recognised. ... But most often he consults the Muses. ... So does Homer for such subjects as the Catalogue of the Greek army.

As this shows, the poets were in the habit of claiming not only divine sources of inspiration, but also divine sources of knowledge—divine guarantors of the truth of their stories.

Precisely the same two claims were raised by the philosophers Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus, it seems, sees himself as a prophet who "talks with raving mouth, ... possessed by the god"—by Zeus, the source of all wisdom. And Parmenides, one could almost say, forms the missing link between Homer or Hesiod on the one side and Descartes on the other. His guiding star and inspiration is the goddess Dike, described by Heraclitus as the guardian of truth. Parmenides describes her as the guardian and keeper of the keys of truth, and as the source of all his knowledge. But Parmenides and Descartes have more in common than the doctrine of divine veracity. For example, Parmenides is told by his divine guarantor of truth that in order to distinguish between truth and falsehood, he must rely upon the intellect alone, to the exclusion of the senses of sight, hearing, and taste. And even the principle of his physical theory which, like Descartes, he founds upon his intellectualist theory of knowledge, is the same as that adopted by Descartes: it is the impossibility of a void, the necessary fullness of the world.

In Plato's *Ion* a sharp distinction is made between divine inspiration—the divine frenzy of the poet—and the divine sources or origins of true knowledge. (The topic is further developed in the *Phaedrus*; and in 275b–c Plato even insists on the distinction between questions of origin and of truth.) Plato grants the inspiration to the poets but denies to them any divine authority for their alleged knowledge of facts. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the divine source of our knowledge plays a decisive part in Plato's famous theory of *anamnesis* which in some measure grants to each man the possession of divine sources of knowledge. (The knowledge considered in this theory is knowledge of the *essence or nature* of a thing rather than of a particular historical fact.) According to Plato's *Meno* there is nothing which our immortal soul does not know, prior to our birth. For as all natures are kindred and akin, our soul must be akin to all natures. Accordingly it knows them all: it knows all things. In being born we forget; but we may recover our memory and our knowledge, though only partially: if only we see the truth again, we must recognise it. All knowledge is therefore re-cognition—re-calling or remembering the essence or true nature that we once knew.

This theory implies that our soul is in a divine state of omniscience as long as it dwells, and participates, in a divine world of ideas or essences or natures, prior to being born. The birth of a man is his fall from grace; it is his fall from a natural or divine state of knowledge; and it is thus the origin and cause of his ignorance. (Here may be the seed of the idea that ignorance is sin.)

IT IS CLEAR THAT there is a close link between this theory of *anamnesis* and the doctrine of the divine origin or source of our knowledge. At the same time, there is also a close link between the theory of *anamnesis* and the doctrine of manifest truth: if, even in our depraved state of forgetfulness, we see the truth, we cannot but recognise it as the truth. So, as the result of *anamnesis*, truth is restored to the status of that which is not forgotten and not concealed (*alēthēs*): it is that which is manifest.

Socrates demonstrates this in a beautiful passage of the *Meno* by helping an uneducated young slave to "recall" the proof of a special case of the theorem of Pythagoras. Here indeed is an optimistic epistemology, and the root of Cartesianism. It seems that, in the *Meno*, Plato was conscious of the highly optimistic character of his theory, for he describes it as a doctrine which makes men eager to learn, to search, and to discover.

Yet disappointment must have come to Plato; for in the *Republic* (and also in the *Phaedrus*) we find the beginnings of a pessimistic epistemology. In the famous story of the prisoners in the cave he shows that the world of our experience is only a shadow, a reflection, of the real world. And he shows that even if one of the prisoners should escape from the cave and face the real world, he would have almost insuperable difficulties in seeing and understanding it—to say nothing of his difficulties in trying to make those understand who

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stayed behind. The difficulties in the way of an understanding of the real world are almost super-human, and only the very few, if anybody at all, can attain to the divine state of understanding the real world—the divine state of true knowledge, of *epistēmē*.

This is a pessimistic theory with regard to almost all men, though not with regard to all. (For it teaches that truth may be attained by a few—the elect. With regard to these it is, one might say, more wildly optimistic than even the doctrine that truth is manifest.) The authoritarian and traditionalist consequences of this pessimistic theory are fully elaborated in the *Laws*.

Thus we find in Plato the first development from an optimistic to a pessimistic epistemology. Each of them forms the basis of one of the two diametrically opposed philosophies of the state and of society: on the one hand an anti-traditionalist, anti-authoritarian, revolutionary and Utopian rationalism of the Cartesian kind, and on the other hand an authoritarian traditionalism.

This development is likely to be connected with the fact that the idea of an epistemological fall of man can be interpreted not only in the sense of the optimistic doctrine of *anamnesis*, but also in a pessimistic sense.

In this latter interpretation, the fall of man condemns all mortals—or almost all—to ignorance. I think one can discern in the story of the cave (and perhaps also in the story of the fall of the city, when the Muses and their divine teaching are neglected) an echo of an interesting older form of this idea. I have in mind Parmenides' doctrine that the opinions of mortals are delusions, and the result of a misguided choice—a misguided convention. (This may stem from Xenophanes' doctrine that all human knowledge is guesswork, and that his own theories are, at best, merely *similar to the truth*.) The idea of an epistemological fall of man can perhaps be found in those words of the goddess that mark the transition from the way of truth to the way of delusive opinion.

> *But you also shall learn how it was that delusive opinion,*
> *Forcing its way through all things, was destined to pass for the real . . .*
> *Now of this world thus arranged to seem wholly like truth I shall tell you*
> *Then you will be nevermore overawed by the notions of mortals.*

Thus though the fall affects all men, the truth may be revealed to the elect by an act of grace —even the truth about the unreal world of the delusions and opinions, the conventional notions and decisions, of mortals; the unreal world of appearance that was destined to be accepted and approved of, as real.

The revelation received by Parmenides, and his conviction that a few may reach certainty about both, the unchanging world of eternal reality and the unreal and changing world of verisimilitude and deception, were some of the main inspirations of Plato's philosophy. It was a theme to which he was for ever returning, oscillating between hope, despair, and resignation.

YET WHAT INTERESTS us here is Plato's epistemology, the theory of *anamnesis* in the *Meno*. It contains, I believe, not only the germs of Descartes' intellectualism, but also the germs of Aristotle's and especially of Bacon's theories of induction.

For Meno's slave is helped by Socrates' judicious questions to remember or recapture the forgotten knowledge which his soul possessed in its ante-natal state of omniscience. It is, I believe, this famous Socratic method, called in the *Theaetetus* the art of midwifery or *maieutic*, to which Aristotle alluded when he said that Socrates was the inventor of the method of induction.

Aristotle, and also Bacon, I wish to suggest, meant by "induction" not so much the inferring of universal laws from particular observed instances as a method by which we are guided to the point whence we can intuit or perceive the essence or the true nature of a thing. But this, as we have seen, is precisely the aim of Socrates' *maieutic*: its aim is to help or lead us to *anamnesis*; and *anamnesis* is the power of seeing the true nature or essence of a thing, the nature or essence with which we were acquainted before birth, before our fall from grace. Thus the aims of the two, *maieutic* and induction, are the same. (Incidentally, Aristotle taught that the result of an induction—the intuition of the essence—was to be expressed by a definition of that essence.)

Now let us look more closely at the two procedures. The *maieutic* art of Socrates consists, essentially, in asking questions designed to destroy prejudices; false beliefs which are often traditional or fashionable beliefs; false answers, given in the spirit of ignorant cocksureness. Socrates himself does not pretend to know. His attitude is described by Aristotle in the words,

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"Socrates raised questions but gave no answers; for he confessed that he did not know." Thus Socrates' *maieutic* is not an art that aims at teaching any belief, but one that aims at purging or cleansing the soul of its false beliefs, its seeming knowledge, its prejudices. It achieves this by teaching us to doubt our own convictions.

Fundamentally the same procedure is part of Bacon's induction.

THE FRAMEWORK OF BACON'S theory of induction is this. He distinguishes in the *Novum Organum* between a true method and a false method. His name for the true method, *"interpretatio naturae,"* is ordinarily translated by the phrase "interpretation of nature," and his name for the false method, *"anticipatio mentis,"* by "anticipation of the mind." Obvious as these translations may seem, they are not adequate. What Bacon means by *"interpretatio naturae"* is, I suggest, the reading of, or better still, *the spelling out of the book of Nature*. (Galileo, in a famous passage of his *Il saggiatore*, speaks of "that great book which lies before our eyes—I mean the universe.")

The term "interpretation" has in modern English a decidedly subjectivistic or relativistic tinge. When we speak of Rudolf Serkin's interpretation of the the *Emperor Concerto*, we imply that there are different interpretations, but that this one is Serkin's. We do not of course wish to imply that Serkin's is not the best, the truest, the nearest to Beethoven's intentions. But although we may be unable to imagine that there is a better one, by using the term "interpretation" we imply that there are other interpretations or readings, leaving the question open whether some of these other readings may, or may not, be equally true.

I have here used the word "reading" as a synonym for "interpretation," not only because the two meanings are so similar but also because "reading" and "to read" have suffered a modification analogous to that of "interpretation" and "to interpret"; except that in the case of "reading" both meanings are still in full use. In the phrase "I have read John's letter," we have the ordinary non-subjectivist meaning. But "I am reading this passage of John's letter differently" or perhaps "My reading of this passage is very different" may illustrate a later, a subjectivistic or relativistic, meaning of the word "reading."

I assert that the meaning of "interpret" (though not in the sense of "translate") has changed in exactly the same way, except that the original meaning—perhaps "reading aloud for those who cannot read themselves"—has been practically lost. To-day even the phrase "the judge must interpret the law" means that he has a certain latitude in interpreting it; while in Bacon's time it would have meant that the judge had the duty to read the law as it stood, and to expound it and to apply it in the one and only right way. *Interpretatio juris* (or *legis*) means either this or, alternatively, the expounding of the law to the layman. It leaves the legal interpreter no latitude; at any rate no more than would be allowed to, say, a sworn interpreter translating a French legal document.

THUS THE TRANSLATION "the interpretation of nature" is misleading; it should be replaced by something like "the (true) reading of nature"; analogous to "the (true) reading of the law." And I suggest that "reading the book of Nature as it is" or better still "spelling out the book of Nature" is what Bacon meant. The point is that the phrase should suggest the avoidance of all interpretation in the modern sense, and that it should *not* contain, more especially, any suggestion of an attempt to interpret what is manifest in nature in the light of non-manifest causes or of hypotheses; for all this would be an *anticipatio mentis*, in Bacon's sense. (It is a mistake, I think, to ascribe to Bacon the teaching that hypotheses—or conjectures—may result from his method of induction; for Baconian induction results in certain knowledge rather than in conjecture.)

As to the meaning of *"anticipatio mentis"* we have only to quote Locke: "men give themselves up to the first anticipations of their minds." This is, practically, a translation from Bacon; and it makes it amply clear that *"anticipatio"* means "prejudice" or even "superstition." This is also clear from the phrase *"anticipatio deorum"* which means harbouring naïve or primitive or superstitious views about the gods. But to make matters still more obvious: "prejudice," of course, also derives from a legal term, and according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* it was Bacon who introduced the verb "to prejudge" into the English language, in the sense of "to judge adversely in advance"—that is, in violation of the judge's duty.

Thus the two methods are (1) "the spelling out of the open book of Nature," leading to

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knowledge or *epistēmē*, and (2) "the prejudice of the mind that wrongly prejudges, and perhaps misjudges, Nature," leading to *doxa*, or mere guesswork, and to the misreading of the book of Nature. This latter method, rejected by Bacon, is in fact a method of interpretation, in the modern sense of the word. It is the *method of conjecture or hypothesis* (a method of which, incidentally, I happen to be a confirmed advocate).

How can we prepare ourselves to read the book of Nature properly or truly? Bacon's answer is: by purging our minds of all anticipations or conjectures or guesses or prejudices. There are various things to be done in order so to purge our minds. We have to get rid of all sorts of idols, or generally held false beliefs; for these distort our observations. But we have also, like Socrates, to look out for all sorts of counter-instances by which to destroy our prejudices concerning the kind of thing whose true essence or nature we wish to ascertain. Like Socrates, we must, by purifying our intellects, prepare our souls to face the eternal light of essences or natures (*cf.* St. Augustine, *Civ. Dei.*): our impure prejudices must be exorcised by the invocation of counter-instances.

Only after our souls have been cleansed in this way may we begin the work of spelling out diligently the open book of Nature, the manifest truth.

In view of all this I suggest that Baconian (and also Aristotelian) induction is the same, fundamentally, as Socratic *maieutic*; that is to say, the preparation of the mind by cleansing it of prejudices, in order to enable it recognise the manifest truth, or to read the open book of Nature.

Descartes' method of systematic doubt is also fundamentally the same: it is a method of destroying all false prejudices of the mind, in order to arrive at the unshakeable basis of self-evident truth.

We can now see more clearly how, in this optimistic epistemology, the state of knowledge is the natural or the pure state of man, the state of the innocent eye which can see the truth, while the state of ignorance has its source in the injury suffered by the innocent eye in man's fall from grace; an injury which can be partially healed by a course of purification. And we can see more clearly why this epistemology, not only in Descartes' but also in Bacon's form, remains essentially a religious doctrine in which the source of all knowledge is divine authority.

One might say that, encouraged by the divine "essences" or divine "natures" of Plato, and by the traditional Greek opposition between the truthfulness of nature and the deceitfulness of man-made convention, Bacon substitutes, in his epistemology, "Nature" for "God." This may be the reason why we have to purify ourselves before we may approach the goddess *Natura*: when we have purified our minds, even our sometimes unreliable senses (held by Plato to be hopelessly impure) will be pure. The sources of knowledge must be kept pure, because any impurity may become a source of ignorance.

In spite of the religious character of their epistemologies, Bacon's and Descartes' attacks upon prejudice, and upon traditional beliefs which we carelessly or recklessly harbour, are clearly anti-authoritarian and anti-traditionalist. For they require us to shed all beliefs except those whose truth we have perceived ourselves. And their attacks were certainly intended to be attacks upon authority and tradition. They were part of the war against authority which it was the fashion of the time to wage, the war against the authority of Aristotle and the tradition of the schools. Men do not need such authorities if they can perceive the truth themselves.

But I do not think that Bacon and Descartes succeeded in freeing their epistemologies from authority; not so much because they appealed to religious authority—to Nature or to God—but for an even deeper reason.

In spite of their individualistic tendencies, they did not dare to appeal to our critical judgment—to your judgment, or to mine; perhaps because they felt that this might lead to subjectivism and to arbitrariness. Yet whatever the reason may have been, they certainly were unable to give up thinking in terms of authority, much as they wanted to do so. They could only replace one authority—that of Aristotle and the Bible—by another. Each of them appealed to a new authority; the one to *the authority of the senses*, and the other to *the authority of the intellect*.

This means that they failed to solve the great problem: How can we admit that our knowledge is a human—an all too human—affair, without at the same time implying that it is all individual whim and arbitrariness?



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YET THIS PROBLEM had been seen and solved long ago; first, it appears, by Xenophanes, and then by Democritus, and by Socrates (the Socrates of the *Apology* rather than of the *Meno*). The solution lies in the realisation that all of us may and often do err, singly and collectively, but that this very idea of error and human fallibility involves another one—the idea of *objective truth*: the standard which we may fall short of. Thus the doctrine of fallibility should not be regarded as part of a pessimistic epistemology. This doctrine implies that we may seek for truth, for objective truth, though more often than not we may miss it by a wide margin. And it implies that if we respect truth, we must search for it by persistently searching for our errors: by indefatigable rational criticism, and self-criticism.

Erasmus of Rotterdam attempted to revive this Socratic doctrine, the all important though unobtrusive doctrine, "Know thyself, and thus admit to thyself how little thou knowest!" Yet this doctrine was swept away by the theory that truth is manifest, and by the new self-assurance exemplified and taught in different ways by Luther, Bacon, and Descartes.

It is important to realise, in this connection, the difference between Cartesian doubt and the doubt of Socrates, or Erasmus, or Montaigne. While Socrates doubts human knowledge or wisdom, and remains firm in his rejection of any pretension to knowledge or wisdom, Descartes doubts everything—but only to end up with the possession of *absolutely certain* knowledge; for he finds that his universal doubt would lead him to doubt the truthfulness of God, which is absurd. Having proved that universal doubt is absurd, he concludes that we *can* know securely, that we *can* be wise—by distinguishing, in the natural light of reason, between clear and distinct ideas whose source is God, and all the others whose source is our own impure imagination. Cartesian doubt, we see, is merely a *maieutic* instrument for establishing a criterion of truth and, with it, a way to secure knowledge and wisdom. Yet for the Socrates of the *Apology*, wisdom consisted in the awareness of our limitations; in knowing how little we know, every one of us.

It was this doctrine of an essential human fallibility which Nicolas of Cusa and Erasmus of Rotterdam (who refers to Socrates) revived; and it was this "humanist" doctrine (in contradistinction to the optimistic doctrine on which Milton relied, the doctrine that truth will prevail) which Nicolas and Erasmus, Montaigne and Locke and Voltaire, followed by John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell, makes the basis of the doctrine of tolerance. "What is tolerance?" asks Voltaire in his *Philosophical Dictionary*; and he answers:

> It is a necessary consequence of our humanity. We are all fallible, and prone to error; let us then pardon each other's folly. This is the first principle of natural right.

BACON AND DESCARTES set up observation and reason as new authorities, and they set them up within each individual man. But in doing so they split man into two parts, into a higher part which had authority with respect to truth—Bacon's observations, Descartes' intellect—and into a lower part. It is this low part which constitutes our ordinary selves, the old Adam in us. For it is always "we ourselves" who are alone responsible for error, if truth is manifest. It is we, with *our* prejudices, *our* negligence, *our* pigheadedness, who are to blame; it is we ourselves who are the sources of our ignorance.

Thus we are split into a human part, we ourselves, the part which is the source of our fallible opinions (*doxa*), of our errors, and of our ignorance; and a super-human part, such as the senses or the intellect, the part which is the source of our knowledge (*epistēmē*), and which has an almost divine authority over us.

But this will not do. For we know that Descartes' physics, admirable as it was in many ways, was mistaken; yet it was based only upon ideas which, he thought, were clear and distinct, and which therefore should have been true. And that the senses were not reliable either, and thus had no authority, was well known to the ancients, for example to Heraclitus and Parmenides and Democritus and Plato (though hardly to Epicurus).

It is strange that this teaching of antiquity could be almost ignored by modern empiricists, including phenomenalists and positivists; yet it is ignored in most of the problems posed by positivists and phenomenalists, and in the solutions they offer. The reason is clear. They still believe that it is not our senses that err, but that it is always "we ourselves" who err in *our interpretation* of what is "given" to us by our senses. Our senses tell the truth, but we may err, for example, when we try to put into *language—conventional, man-made, imperfect language*—what they tell us. It is our linguistic

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description which is faulty because it may be tinged by prejudice.[2]

By blaming *us*, and our language (or misuse of language), it is possible to uphold the divine authority of the senses (and even of language). But it is possible only at the cost of widening the gap between this authority and ourselves: between the pure sources from which we can obtain an authoritative knowledge of the truthful goddess Nature, and our impure and guilty selves: between God and man. As indicated before, this idea of the truthfulness of Nature which, I believe, can be discerned in Bacon, derives from the Greeks; for it is part of the classical opposition between *nature* and human *convention* which, according to Plato, is due to Pindar; which may be discerned in Parmenides; and which is identified by him, and by some sophists (for example, by Hippias) and partly also by Plato himself, with the opposition between divine truth and human error, or even falsehood. After Bacon, and under his influence, the idea that nature is divine and truthful, and that all error or falsehood is due to the deceitfulness of our own human conventions, continued to play a major role not only in the history of philosophy, of science, and of politics, but also in that of the visual arts. This may be seen, for example, from Constable's most interesting theories on nature, veracity, prejudice, and convention (quoted in E. H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*). It has also played a role in the history of literature, and even in that of music.

CAN THE STRANGE VIEW that the truth of a statement may be decided upon by inquiring into its sources—that is to say its *origin*—be explained as due to some logical mistake which might be cleared up? Or can we do no better than explain it in terms of religious beliefs, or in psychological terms—referring perhaps to parental authority? I believe that it is indeed possible to discern here a logical mistake which is connected with the close analogy between the *meaning* of our words, or terms, or concepts, and the *truth* of our statements or propositions.

It is easy to see that the meaning of our words does have some connection with their history or their origin. A word is, logically considered, a conventional sign; psychologically considered, it is a sign whose meaning is established by usage or custom or association. Logically considered, its meaning is indeed established by an initial decision—something like a primary definition or convention, a kind of original social contract; and psychologically considered, its meaning was established when we originally learned to use it, when we first formed our linguistic habits and associations. Thus there is a point in the complaint of the schoolboy about the unnecessary artificiality of French in which "pain" means bread, while English, he feels, is so much more natural and straightforward in calling pain "pain" and bread "bread." He may understand the conventionality of the usage perfectly well, but he gives expression to the feeling that there is no reason why the original conventions—original for him—should not be binding. So his mistake may consist merely in forgetting that there can be several equally binding original conventions.

But who has not made, implicitly, the same mistake? Most of us have caught ourselves in a feeling of surprise when we find that in France even little children speak French fluently. Of course, we smile about our own naïvety; but we do not smile about the policeman who discovers that *the real name* of the man called "Samuel Jones" was "John Smith"—though here is, no doubt, a last vestige of the magical belief that we gain power over a man or a god by gaining knowledge of his *real* name.

Thus there is indeed a familiar as well as logically defensible sense in which the "true" or "proper" meaning of a term is its original meaning; so that if we understand it, we do so because we learned it correctly—from a true authority, from one who knew the language. This shows that the problem of the meaning of a word is indeed linked to the problem of the authoritative source, or the origin, of our usage.

It is different with the problem of the truth of a statement of fact, a proposition. For anybody can make a factual mistake—even in matters on which he should be an authority, such as his own age or the colour of a thing which he has just this moment clearly and dis-

[2] So our man-made language was at fault. But then it was discovered that our language too was "given" to us, in an important sense: that it embodied the wisdom and experience of many generations, and that it should not be blamed if we misuse it. So language too became a truthful authority that could never deceive us. If we fall into temptation and use language in vain, then it is we who are to blame for the trouble that ensues. For language is a jealous God and will not hold him guiltless that taketh His words in vain, but will throw him into darkness and confusion.

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tinctly perceived. And as to origins, a statement may easily have been false when it was first made, and first properly understood. A word, on the other hand, must have had a proper meaning as soon as it was ever understood.

If we thus reflect upon the difference between the ways in which the meaning of words and the truth of statements is related to their origins, we are hardly tempted to think that the question of origin can have much bearing on the question of knowledge or of truth.

I WILL NOW LEAVE all these largely historical reflections aside, and turn to the problems themselves, and to their solution.

This part might be described as a *criticism of empiricism*, as formulated for example in the following classical statement of Hume's:

> If I ask you why you believe any particular matter of fact . . . , you must tell me some reason; and this reason will be some other fact, connected with it. But as you cannot proceed after this manner, *in infinitum*, you must at last terminate in some act, which is present to your memory or senses; or must allow that your belief is entirely without foundation. (*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section v, Part i.)

The problem of the validity of empiricism may be roughly put as follows: is observation the ultimate source of our knowledge of nature? And if not, what are the sources of our knowledge?

These questions remain, whatever I may have said about Bacon, and even if I should have managed to make those parts of his philosophy on which I have commented somewhat unattractive for Baconians and for other empiricists.

The problem of the source of our knowledge has recently been restated as follows. If we make an assertion, we must justify it; but this means that we must be able to answer the following questions.

*"How do you know? What are the sources of your assertion?"*

This, the empiricist holds, amounts in its turn to the question,

*"What observations* (or memories of observations) *underlie your assertion?"*

I find this string of questions quite unsatisfactory.

FIRST OF ALL, most of our assertions are not based upon observations, but upon all kinds of other sources. "I read it in *The Times*" or perhaps "I read it in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*" is a more likely and a more definite answer to the question "How do you know?" than "I have observed it" or "I know it from an observation I made last year."

"But," the empiricist will reply, "how do you think that *The Times* or the *Encyclopædia Britannica* got their information? Surely, if you only carry on your inquiry long enough, you will end up with *reports of the observations of eye-witnesses* (sometimes called "protocol sentences" or—by yourself—"basic statements"). "Admittedly," the empiricist will continue, "books are largely made from other books. Admittedly, a historian, for example, will work from documents. But ultimately, in the last instance, these other books, or these documents, must have been based upon observations. Otherwise they would have to be described as poetry, or invention, or lies, but not as knowledge. It is in this sense that we empiricists assert that observation must be the ultimate source of our knowledge."

Here we have the empiricist's case, as it is still put by some of my positivist friends.

I believe that this case is as little valid as Bacon's; that the answer to the question of the sources of knowledge goes against the empiricist; and, finally, that this whole question of ultimate sources—sources to which one may appeal, as one might to a higher court or a higher authority—must be rejected as based upon a mistake.

First: if you actually went on questioning *The Times* and its correspondents about the sources of their knowledge, you would in fact never arrive at all those observations of eye-witnesses in the existence of which the empiricist believes. You would find, rather, that with every single step you take, the need for further steps increases in snowball-like fashion.

Take as an example the sort of assertion for which reasonable people might simply accept as sufficient the answer "I read it in *The Times*"; let us say the assertion "The Prime Minister has decided to return to London several days ahead of schedule." Now assume for a moment that somebody doubts this assertion, or feels the need to investigate into its truth. What shall he do? If he has a friend in the Prime Minister's office, the simplest and most direct way would be to ring him up; and if this friend corroborated the message, then that is that.

In other words, the investigator will, if possible, try to check, or to examine, *the asserted*

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*fact itself*, rather than trace the source of the information. But according to the empiricist theory, the assertion "I have read it in *The Times*" is merely a first step in a justification procedure consisting in tracing the ultimate source. What is the next step?

There are at least two next steps. One would be to reflect that "I have read it in *The Times*" is also an assertion, and that we might ask "What is the source of your knowledge that you read it in *The Times* and not, say, in a paper looking very similar to *The Times*?" The other is to ask *The Times* for the sources of its knowledge. The answer to the first question may be "But we have only *The Times* on order and we always get it in the morning" which gives rise to a host of further questions about sources which we shall not pursue. The second question may elicit from the editor of *The Times* the answer: "We had a telephone call from the Prime Minister's Office." Now according to the empiricist procedure, we should at this stage ask next: "Who is the gentleman who received the telephone call?" and then get his observation report; but we should also have to ask that gentleman: "What is the source of your knowledge that the voice you heard came from an official in the Prime Minister's office," and so on.

THERE IS A SIMPLE REASON why this tedious sequence of questions never comes to a satisfactory conclusion. It is this. Every witness must always make ample use, in his report, of his knowledge of persons, places, things, linguistic usages, social conventions, and so on. He cannot rely merely upon his eyes or ears, especially if his report is to be of use in justifying any assertion worth justifying. But this fact must of course always raise new questions as to the sources of those elements of his knowledge which are not immediately observational.

This is why the programme of tracing back all knowledge to its ultimate source in observation is logically impossible to carry through: it leads to an infinite regress. (The doctrine that truth is manifest cuts off the regress. This is interesting because it may help to explain the attractiveness of that doctrine.)

I wish to mention, in parenthesis, that this argument is closely related to another—that all observation involves interpretation in the light of our theoretical knowledge,[3] or that pure observational knowledge, unadulterated by theory, would, if at all possible, be utterly barren and futile.

The most striking thing about the observationalist programme of asking for sources—apart from its tediousness—is its stark violation of common sense. For if we are doubtful about an assertion, then the normal procedure is to test it, rather than to ask for its sources; and if we find independent corroboration, then we shall often accept the assertion without bothering at all about sources.

Of course there are cases in which the situation is different. Testing an historical assertion always means going back to sources; but not, as a rule, to the reports of eye-witnesses.

CLEARLY, no historian will accept the evidence of documents uncritically. There are problems of genuineness, there are problems of bias, and there are also such problems as the reconstruction of earlier sources. There are, of course, also problems such as: was the writer present when these events happened? But this is not one of the characteristic problems of the historian. He may worry about the reliability of a report, but he will rarely worry about whether or not the writer of a document was an eye-witness of the event in question, even assuming that this event was of the nature of an observable event. A letter saying "I changed my mind yesterday on this question" may be most valuable historical evidence, even though changes of mind are unobservable (and even though we may conjecture, in view of other evidence, that the writer was lying).

As to the eye-witnesses, they are important almost exclusively in a court of law where they can be cross-examined. As most lawyers know, eye-witnesses often err. This has been experimentally investigated, with the most striking results. Witnesses most anxious to describe an event as it happened are liable to make scores of mistakes, especially if some exciting things happen in a hurry; and if an event suggests some tempting interpretation, then this interpretation, more often than not, is allowed to distort what has actually been seen.

Hume's view of historical knowledge was different:

> ...we believe that Caesar was kill'd in the Senate-house on the *ides of March*... because this fact is establish'd on the unanimous testimony of historians, who agree to assign this precise time and place to that event. Here are certain characters and letters present either to

[3] See my *Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1956).

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> our memory or senses; which characters we likewise remember to have been us'd as the signs of certain ideas; and these ideas were either in the minds of such as were immediately present at that action, and receiv'd the ideas directly from its existence; or they were deriv'd from the testimony of others, and that again from another testimony . . . 'till we arrive at those who were eye-witnesses and spectators of the event.

It seems to me that this view must lead to the infinite regress decribed above. For the problem is, of course, whether "the unanimous testimony of historians" is to be accepted, or whether it is, perhaps, to be rejected as the result of their reliance on a common yet spurious source. The appeal to "letters present to our memory or our senses" cannot have any bearing on this or on any other relevant problem of historiography.

BUT WHAT, then, are the sources of our knowledge?

The answer, I think, is this: there are all kinds of sources of our knowledge; but *none has authority*.

We may say that *The Times* can be a source of knowledge, or the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. We may say that certain papers in the *Physical Review* about a problem in physics have more authority, and are more of the character of a source, than an article about the same problem in *The Times* or the *Encyclopædia*. But it would be quite wrong to say that the source of the article in the *Physical Review* must have been wholly, or even partly, observation. The source may well be the discovery of an inconsistency in another paper, or say, the discovery of the fact that a hypothesis proposed in another paper could be tested by such and such an experiment; all these non-observational discoveries are "sources" in the sense that they all add to our knowledge.

I do not, of course, deny that an experiment may also add to our knowledge, and in a most important manner. But it is not a source in any ultimate sense. It has always to be checked: as in the example of the news in *The Times* we do not, as a rule, question the eye-witness of an experiment, but, if we doubt the result, we may repeat the experiment, or ask somebody else to repeat it.

The fundamental mistake made by the philosophical theory of the ultimate sources of our knowledge is that it does not distinguish clearly enough between questions of origin and questions of validity. Admittedly, in the case of historiography, these two questions may sometimes coincide. The question of the validity of an historical assertion may be testable only, or mainly, in the light of the origin of certain sources. But in general the two questions are different; and in general we do not test the validity of an assertion or information by tracing its sources or its origin, but we test them, much more directly, by a critical examination of what has been asserted—of the asserted facts themselves.

Thus the empiricist's questions "How do you know? What is the source of your assertion?" are wrongly put. They are not formulated in an inexact or slovenly manner, but *they are entirely misconceived*. They are questions that beg for an authoritarian answer.

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS of epistemology may be said to result from yes-answers or no-answers to the questions about the sources of knowledge. *They never challenge these questions, or dispute their legitimacy.* The questions are taken as perfectly natural, and nobody seems to see any harm in them.

This is quite interesting, for these questions are clearly authoritarian in spirit. They can be compared with that traditional question of political theory, "Who should rule?", which begs for an authoritarian answer such as "the best," or "the wisest," or "the people," or "the majority."[4] This political question is wrongly put and the answers which it elicits are paradoxical (as I have tried to show in chapter 7 of my *Open Society*). It should be replaced by a completely different question such as *"How can we organise our political institutions so that bad or incompetent rulers* (whom we should try not to get, but whom we so easily might get all the same) *cannot do too much damage?"* I believe that only by changing our question in this way can we hope to proceed towards a reasonable theory of political institutions.

The question about the sources of our knowledge can be replaced in a similar way. It has always been asked in the spirit of: "What are the best sources of our knowledge—the most reliable ones, those which will not lead us into error, and those to which we can and must turn, in case of doubt, as the last court of appeal?"

[4] It suggests, incidentally, such silly alternatives as "Whom do you want as rulers: the capitalists or the workers?", analogous to "What is the ultimate source of knowledge: the intellect or the senses?"

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I propose to assume, instead, that no such ideal sources exist—no more than ideal rulers—and that *all* "sources" are liable to lead us into error at times. And I propose to replace, therefore, the question of the sources of our knowledge by the entirely different question: *"How can we hope to detect and eliminate error?"*

THE QUESTION OF THE SOURCES of our knowledge, like so many authoritarian questions, is a *genetic* one. It asks for the origin of our knowledge, in the belief that knowledge may legitimise itself by its pedigree. The nobility of the racially pure knowledge, the untainted knowledge, the knowledge which derives from the highest authority, if possible from God: these are the (often unconscious) metaphysical ideas behind the question. My modified question, "How can we hope to detect error?" may be said to derive from the view that such pure, untainted and certain sources do not exist, and that questions of origin or of purity should not be confounded with questions of validity, or of truth. This view may be said to be as old as Xenophanes. Xenophanes knew that our knowledge is guesswork, opinion—*doxa* rather than *epistemē*—as shown by his verses:

> *The gods did not reveal, from the beginning,*
> *All things to us; but in the course of time,*
> *Through seeking, men find that which is the better.*
>
> *But as for certain truth, no man has known it,*
> *Nor will he know it; neither of the gods,*
> *Nor yet of all the things of which I speak.*
> *And even if by chance he were to utter*
> *Finality, he would himself not know it;*
> *For all is but a woven web of guesses.*

Yet the traditional question of the authoritative sources of knowledge is repeated even to-day—and very often by positivists, and by other philosophers who believe themselves to be in revolt against authority.

The proper answer to my question "How can we hope to detect and eliminate error?" is, I believe, "By *criticising* the theories or guesses of others and—if we can train themselves to do so—by *criticising* our own theories or guesses."[5] This answer sums up a position which I propose to call "critical rationalism." It is a view, an attitude, and a tradition, which we owe to the Greeks. It is very different from the "rationalism" or "intellectualism" of Descartes and his school, and very different even from the epistemology of Kant. Yet in the field of ethics, of moral knowledge, it was approached by Kant with his *principle of autonomy*. This principal expresses his realisation that we must not accept the command of an authority, however exalted, as the basis of ethics. For whenever we are faced with a command by an authority, it is for us to judge, critically, whether it is moral or immoral to obey. The authority may have power to enforce its commands, and we may be powerless to resist. But if we have the physical power of choice, then the ultimate responsibility remains with us. It is our own critical decision whether to obey a command; whether to submit to an authority.

Kant boldly carried this idea into the field of religion:

> Much as my words may startle you, you must not condemn me for saying: every man creates his God. From the moral point of view . . . you even have to create your God, in order to worship in Him your creator. For in whatever way the Deity should be made known to you, and even . . . if He should reveal Himself to you: it is you . . . who must judge whether you are permitted [by your conscience] to believe in Him, and to worship Him.[6]

In view of this bold statement, it seems strange that Kant did not adopt the same attitude—that of critical examination, of the critical search for error, in the field of science. I feel certain that it was only his acceptance of the authority of Newton's cosmology—a result of its almost unbelievable success in passing the most severe tests—which prevented Kant from doing so. If this interpretation of Kant is correct, then the critical rationalism (and also the critical empiricism) which I advocate merely puts the finishing touch to Kant's own critical philosophy. And this was made possible by Einstein, who taught us that Newton's theory may well be mistaken in spite of its overwhelming success.

SO MY ANSWER TO the question "How do you know? What is the source or the basis of your assertion? What observations have led you to it?" would be: "I do *not* know: my assertion was merely a guess. Never mind the source, or the sources, from which it may spring—there are many possible sources, and I may not be aware of half of them; and origins or pedigrees have in any case little bearing upon truth. But if you

[5] The latter point is highly desirable, but not indispensable; for if we fail to criticise our own theories, there may be others to do it for us.

[6] Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Pure Reason*, 2nd edition (1794).

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are interested in the problem which I tried to solve by my tentative assertion, you may help me by criticising it as severely as you can; and if you can design some experimental test which you think might refute my assertion, I shall gladly, and to the best of my powers, help you to refute it."

This answer applies, strictly speaking, only if the question is asked about some scientific assertion as distinct from an historical one. If my conjecture was an historical one, sources (in the non-ultimate sense) will of course come into the critical discussion of its validity. Yet fundamentally, my answer will be the same, as we have seen.

IT IS HIGH TIME NOW, I think, to formulate the epistemological results of this discussion. I will put them in the form of nine theses.

*1.* There are no ultimate sources of knowledge. Every source, every suggestion, is welcome; and every source, every suggestion, is open to critical examination. Except in history, we usually examine the facts themselves rather than the sources of our information.

*2.* The proper epistemological question is not one about sources; rather, we ask whether the assertion made is true—that is to say, whether it agrees with the facts.[7] And we try to find this out, as well as we can, by examining or testing the assertion itself; either in a direct way, or by examining or testing its consequences.

*3.* In connection with this examination, all kinds of arguments may be relevant. A typical procedure is to examine whether our theories are consistent with our observations. But we may also examine, for example, whether our historical sources are internally consistent.

*4.* Quantitatively and qualitatively by far the most important source of our knowledge—apart from inborn knowledge—is tradition. Most things we know we have learned by example, by being told, by reading books, by learning how to criticise, how to take and accept criticism, how to respect truth.

*5.* The fact that most of the sources of our knowledge are traditional condemns anti-traditionalism as futile. But this fact must not be held to support a traditionalist attitude: every bit of our traditionalist knowledge (and even our inborn knowledge) is open to critical examination and may be overthrown. Nevertheless, without tradition, knowledge would be impossible.

*6.* Knowledge cannot start from nothing—from a *tabula rasa*—nor yet from observation. The advance of knowledge consists, mainly, in the modifications of earlier knowledge. Although we may sometimes, for example in archaeology, advance through a chance observation, the significance of the discovery will usually depend upon its power to modify our earlier theories.

*7.* Pessimistic and optimistic epistemologies are about equally mistaken. The pessimistic cave story of Plato is the true one, and not his optimistic story of *anamnesis* (even though we should admit that all men, like all other animals, and even all plants, possess inborn knowledge). But although the world of appearances is indeed a world of mere shadows on the walls of our cave, we all constantly reach out beyond it; and although, as Democritus said, the truth is hidden in the deep, we can probe into the deep. There is no criterion of truth at our disposal, and this fact supports pessimism. But we do possess criteria which, if we are lucky, often allow us to recognise error and falsity. Clarity and distinctness are not criteria of truth, but such things as obscurity and confusion indicate error. Similarly, coherence does not establish truth, but incoherence and inconsistency establish falsehood. And, when they are recognised, our own errors provide the dim red lights which help us in feeling our way out of the dark of our cave.

*8.* Neither observation nor reason are authorities. Intellectual intuition and imagination are most important, but they are not reliable: they may show us things very clearly, and yet they may mislead us. They are indispensable as the main sources of our theories; but most of our theories are false anyway. The most important function of observation and reasoning, and even of intuition and imagination, is to help us in the critical examination of those bold conjectures which are the means by which we probe into the unknown.

*9.* Every solution of a problem raises new unsolved problems; the more so the deeper the original problem and the bolder its solution. The more we learn about the world, and the deeper our learning, the more conscious, specific, and articulate will be our knowledge of what we do not know, our knowledge of our ignorance. For this, indeed, is the main source of our ignorance—the fact that our knowledge can only

[7] That we may operate, without getting involved in antinomies with the idea of objective truth in the sense of correspondence to the facts, has been shown by the work of Alfred Tarski.

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be finite, while our ignorance must necessarily be infinite.

WE MAY GET A GLIMPSE of the vastness of our ignorance when we contemplate the vastness of the heavens: though the mere size of the universe is not the deepest cause of our ignorance, it is one of its causes. "Where I seem to differ from some of my friends," F. P. Ramsey wrote in a charming passage of his *Foundations of Mathematics*,

> is in attaching little importance to physical size. I don't feel in the least humble before the vastness of the heavens. The stars may be large but they cannot think or love; and these are qualities which impress me far more than size does. I take no credit for weighing nearly seventeen stone.

I suspect that Ramsey's friends would have agreed with him about the insignificance of sheer physical size; and I suspect that if they felt humble before the vastness of the heavens, this was because they saw in it a symbol of their ignorance.

I believe that it would be worth trying to learn something about the world even if in trying to do so we should merely learn that we do not know much. This state of learned ignorance might be a help in many of our troubles. It might be well for all of us to remember that, while differing widely in the various little bits we know, in our infinite ignorance we are all equal.

THERE is a last question I wish to raise. If only we look for it we can often find a true idea, worthy of being preserved, in a philosophical theory which must be rejected as false. Can we find an idea like this in one of the theories of the ultimate sources of our knowledge?

I believe we can; and I suggest that it is one of the two main ideas which underlie the doctrine that the source of all our knowledge is super-natural. The first of these ideas is false, I believe, while the second is true.

The first, the false idea, is that we must justify our knowledge, or our theories, by *positive* reasons, that is, by reasons capable of establishing them, or at least of making them highly probable; at any rate, by better reasons than that they have so far withstood criticism. This idea implies, I suggested, that we must appeal to some ultimate or authoritative source of true knowledge; which still leaves open the character of that authority—whether it is human, like observation or reason, or super-human (and therefore supernatural).

The second idea—whose vital importance has been stressed by Russell—is that no man's authority can establish truth by decree; that we should submit to truth; that *truth is above human authority*.

Taken together these two ideas almost immediately yield the conclusion that the sources from which our knowledge derives must be super-human; a conclusion which tends to encourage self-righteousness and the use of force against those who refuse to see the divine truth.

Some who rightly reject this conclusion do not, unhappily, reject the first idea—the belief in the existence of ultimate sources of knowledge. Instead they reject the second idea—the thesis that truth is above human authority. They thereby endanger the idea of the objectivity of knowledge, and of common standards of criticism or rationality.

WHAT WE SHOULD DO, I suggest, is to give up the idea of ultimate sources of knowledge, and admit that all knowledge is human; that it is mixed with our errors, our prejudices, our dreams, and our hopes; that all we can do is to grope for truth even though it be beyond our reach. We may admit that our groping is often inspired, but we must be on our guard against the belief, however deeply felt, that our inspiration carries any authority, divine or otherwise. If we thus admit that there is no authority beyond the reach of criticism to be found within the whole province of our knowledge, however far it may have penetrated into the unknown, then we can retain, without danger, the idea that truth is beyond human authority. And we must retain it.

For without this idea there can be no objective standards of inquiry; no criticism of our conjectures; no groping for the unknown; no quest for knowledge.

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# NOTES & TOPICS

## With the Leopard

THE MOUNTAINS round Palermo have never looked so close as they do in this palpitating heat; there is something menacing about those great rocks thrusting sheer out of the plain, fit places for the ageless or the primeval, noon-day demons, centaurs, and the bandit Giuliano. Here in Sicily heat is like a ravening beast, another image to add to Lampedusa's many-sided Leopard. In the sun it crouches for a pounce, in the shade it attacks the innards and liquidates the will. Beneath it Palermo lies aquiver with suspense from the first moments after dawn. On main streets, near impenetrable slums, taut faces jostle and tension seems at breaking-point. But down at the end of one street, clearly visible from the centre of town, lies a symbol of coolness and escape, a white ship at anchor ready to sail for the Isles of the Hesperides with those who can afford the fare.

This heat emphasises two sides of the Sicilian character; one a yearning for the ineffable, death, or that mysterious "otherness" which impregnates Lampedusa's book; the other so diffused in the western part of the island that there is even a local name for it, *la tensione siciliana*. This pressure of unresolved opposites, with its corollary of torpor or languor, can be felt on arrival at Palermo's desert airport, Punta Raisa; it attenuates eastwards and is not felt along the coast at Cefalu. But in Palermo itself, and to the west and south, an exasperation is in the air which must shift the pivot of capital sins hereabouts from pride to impatience. Added to the normal tensions, the groupings and disintegrations of a film-company on location it might be expected to make life on a "set" in the Sicilian summer almost unbearable. But in some way the two tensions even each other out. In the heat and dust the Roman cameramen, Milanese dressers, Bolognese interior decorators, potter round amiably, half-naked or in singlets and jeans as for road-mending, comrades in misfortune on alien soil. To most of them a summer in Sicily is like sweating it out on one of those convict islands that used to encircle the southern Italian coasts. The old dictum "No one travels south of Rome" has extended its meaning in recent years as the search for bathing beaches spreads, but even now very few Italians from the mainland think of coming to Sicily for pleasure. To them it is a foreign country or a kind of colony whose appalling condition excites in them a mixture of guilt and contempt. The "troupe" of *The Leopard* wandering round Palermo in search of pleasure in off moments are conspicuous by their different faces, clothes, cars, and something in their bearing that emphasises detachment.

FILMING IS OF ITS VERY NATURE full of paradoxes; a particularly odd one here is that one of the members of the company most sensitive and sympathetic to Sicilian life and manners is an American, Burt Lancaster himself, the very actor whose choice for the key part of the Prince of Salina caused raised eyebrows. He has absorbed local atmosphere, visited the city's monuments, read background books on the island (at the moment he is investigating Dennis Mack Smith's views on Garibaldi and the Sicilian peasantry in 1860). His knowledge of the text of *The Leopard* is extraordinary; he has met and talked with almost everyone connected with the book. The actor's chameleon gift of sympathy, of entering an alien life and making it his own, has combined with a long-standing and very personal interest in the arts quite apart from acting. He has lived *The Leopard*, until as filming develops he is coming to represent more and more the spirit of the book, perhaps more aware than anyone on the set apart from the director how difficult it is to put a work of such verbal artistry into visual terms, and more determined to fill his dialogue with Lampedusa's poetic meaning. Mutual respect grows between himself and Italy's most meticulous and dynamic director, Luchino Visconti, whose view of the script is more sociological. Their heads are often to be seen together on the set animatedly discussing some point in the script. Their collaboration augurs well for the serious quality of a film in which a member of the new world has so fruitfully been brought in to redress the balance of the old.

The cinema has a way of holding a distorting mirror up to nature, and producing an image that is larger than life. These 175 aliens, Italians, French, with a smattering of British and Americans move through the Sicilian scene which they are here to "capture" with an uncanny resemblance to an invading force. The flag of the producing company, Titanus, floats from technical vehicles, caravans, and private transport of exotic and expensive design; and the route to a location in the remote interior such as Ciminna where the outdoor scenes of Donnafugata are being filmed, is scattered with



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coloured arrows bearing the same potent and faintly pixie syllables. They might be road signs of some armoured division in war. Again, up at Bellolampo above Palermo where the Salina family carriages were being "shot" on their way to Donnafugata amid "bare hillsides flaming yellow in the sun," the company's transport spread in a defile of stony slopes might have been some brigade headquarters in *lager* somewhere in the Western Desert. Closer to the "shooting" an assistant director in a bush-shirt was wielding a walkie-talkie with expert ease. High above, between rocks, the sun glinted on massed cameras lying in wait like field-guns for the carriages to pass below. On a distant track Alain Delon as Tancredi, in top-hat and pegtop trousers, wheeled his horse like an elegant decoy.

To Sicilians who stand on the side of roads watching all this with slightly dazed surprise these film-folk must seem to have unlimited resources; those closer to the organisation would also notice an ultimate ruthlessness where the film's interests are concerned, which is again not unlike an army intent on winning a war. Actually the tactical administrative headquarters of Titanus in Palermo, mentioned with bated breath like some font of Providence as *"la Produzione,"* is much subject to local pressures. The Mafia, *l'onorata società*, has already caused a major change of location from one projected on the former Lampedusa estates at Palma di Montechiaro, in the worst *mafioso* district on the island. Now at the entrance to every set is to be seen a paunchy man of imposing aspect in singlet and straw hat; he was taken on as a watch-dog after marching into the offices and announcing himself as a Mafia leader who could provide "protection." ("As if they would not have come to me if they'd wanted to arrange anything of that kind," murmured the Duke of Palma, Lampedusa's adopted son, who is attached to the company as Sicilian expert.)

Such troubles must have bothered the conquerors of Sicily ever since the ancient Phœnicians first came over from nearby Carthage and treated the mysterious native "Siculians" as a subject race. Even Garibaldi was not immune, though to his advantage, for the Mafia may have had a hand in that odd collapse of the Bourbon defences of Palermo in June, 1860. Certainly the Americans were deeply involved after their entry in 1943.

The Prince of Lampedusa, whose eye was so attuned to his fellow-countrymen's reactions to invaders, would have had some fascinating, though no doubt muted, comments on the forces unleashed by the filming of his own book. In the tiny inner world of Palermo society, most of whose members are connected with or descended from characters in *The Leopard*, there is a mixture of alarm and fascination masked by well-bred detachment, a love-hate towards these outsiders who have come to portray *"la belle époque"* of their own great-grandparents. The local Four Hundred (the exact number is 250) lie, now the heat has started, beneath the pines and breezes of the Mondello Yacht Club, commenting glancingly on these visitors from a social outer space who have so strangely become part of their summer. To them, Visconti is an alarming renegade, while Burt Lancaster, whose huge yacht lies out beyond the mole making their own little craft look like cockle-shells, and who seems larger than life not only physically, must be like some invading tribal chieftain, an Alaric or Theodoric whose surprisingly good manners they can observe for themselves, as they have made him a member of the club and there he is lunching at the next table. Though last year this particular set did entertain the Prince and Princess of Liège, nowadays a film-star of such rank is the nearest most Italians get to royalty. While popular reaction in Italy itself varies from familiarity to fetish-like respect ("If I could shake your hand, Mr. Lancaster, it would change my life," said a girl of 15 from Ohio in a restaurant in Rome), Sicilian interest is contained and withdrawn. For local grandees he fits into a pattern of hospitality that throughout the ages has included anyone of high degree visiting the island, from kings, emperors, and viceroys, to Wagner and General Patton.

The shooting began with barricades in a Palermo slum, Piazzo dello Spasimo in the Arab quarter of the Kalsa, some two months ago. Now, as if the phase of popular revolution has been tamed by "forces of order," the headquarters' cars roll in and out of the *porte-cochère* of the lushiest hotel, Villa Igeia. Down in the bar actors and producers, operating troops and staff, down Bloody Marys at fabulous prices under the indifferent eyes of rich elderly tourists. Along the coast of the Conca d'Oro a little season has whirled up among a few villas outside the normal letting range that have been taken by various members of the "troupe." Delon projects gay house-parties with friends from the Côte d'Azur mingling with permanent *entourage* of Romy Shneider, agent, and elocution coaches (he has two). Even the Hollywood make-up man (who, such are the improbabilities of the film-world, turns out to be much closer to a viceroy than any of the Spanish viceroys' descendants from baroque days down at the Club, being a nephew of the first Lord Wavell)

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has a villa overlooking the sea. Squire of this ephemeral summer colony is Lancaster himself, who has moved with his wife and five children into one of the last great country houses in as perfect running order as the Prince of Salina's a hundred years ago. Here, at Villa Scalea, home of the Lanza di Scalea, gardeners in green aprons sweep alleys beneath a long stucco façade, while behind shutters lie cool rooms aglisten with mirrors and rococo, and the only sounds are the faint tinkle of a fountain and the pad of heraldic-looking dogs on marble.

ONLY THE DIRECTOR HIMSELF, Luchino Visconti, is seldom seen *in giro* except on the set. This unlikely figure, Duke of Modrone from his father's side and millionaire from toothpaste factories on his mother's, is himself a breakaway from his own world, a Philippe Egalitè of film-land, who lives Right and thinks Left. In Italian show business his position is something akin to Reinhardt's or Diagelev's on an international plane which he is only now achieving. Founder of the whole school of Italian neo-realist films, opera and theatre producer on a splendid yet always personal scale, he is "Maestro" to his Italian staff. There is something rather superb about his aloofness. Invitations, even from cousins, are not answered. Like a commander-in-chief protected by A.D.C.s, or an oriental satrap surrounded by janissaries, he lives in the huge hulk of an ancient fort on the sea where Nelson once had his headquarters. Two months ago it was a vast ruin; now it is full of plumbing, furniture, and footmen, ready to receive its august tenant until the end of summer. Here, after an exhausting day of personally surveying, animating, and sometimes participating in every detail of a "take" (once his staff watched riveted as he personally stuffed a mattress with straw), Visconti relaxes amid his favourites, parlour-games are played, and the court-dance is said to be the twist.

FILM-WORK on location sets up a hallucinatory life of its own, with its own reality and its own personal relationships, often so intense that they do not seem part of the cat's cradle in which we are all involved. In location-work on *The Leopard* there is another element beyond the usual switchings of identity and swoppings of personality that fascinated Pirandello about filming; a kind of double or treble focus between characters in the book, their protagonists on the set, and their originals in real life. Since the author only died just five years ago, a few months after finishing his one novel, there is even a parallel in age-groups. The author's adopted son Giò Lanza di Mazzarino, Duke of Palma, model for the appearance and mannerisms of the Tancredi of the book, can be seen chatting with Alain Delon who takes the part; and there was one glimpse of them both flanking Visconti, surely himself animated by some partial self-identification with old Don Fabrizio of the novel, whose astronomical interests had so divided him from the life of his class.

One of the peak dramatic moments of the filming so far has been off-camera, and it took a young American publicity man, Lee Minoff, to arrange it. This was the first visit of the author's widow to the set. It happened at a villa outside Palermo, Boscogrande, done up to represent the Villa Salina of the first and last chapters of the novel. The Princess of Lampedusa, ex-President of the Italian Psychoanalysts' Association, devoted tender of her husband's shrine (she has personally checked most of the 16 translations), is as potent and awe-inspiring a figure in her own field as Visconti is in his. They had not met before, nor had the Princess been shown the script. As she advanced down the splendid enfilade of salons furnished for the duration of the filming with heirlooms from the Mazzarino palace, a hush fell. On the crowded set tension hung in the air, affecting all present except the scene's two main protagonists. They met; "Just like a home of old aunts in the country," her voice was heard saying; they began discoursing with ease and grace as if no one else were present; then Lancaster entered, was presented, cameras flashed ("Well, perhaps as there are so many lovely girls here . . ." came her murmur), and she sank on to a chair to watch Visconti direct Rina Morelli as the Princess of Salina, her own glistening black robes stealing all the colour from the brocade costumes and silken walls. An old gramophone struck up *"Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni"* from La Somnambula. . . .

At Boscogrande now only the retouched frescoes, and a floor with "naked figures from mythology painted over the milky depths of the tiles" remain to puzzle art-historians and geneologists of the future, who will wonder what the Lampedusa prancing leopard can be doing amid the emblems of the mad Barons of Boscogrande. The miniatures and Trapani corals, the Hayez portraits and English hunting prints, the ormolu and porcelain objects and ivory work-baskets, have gone back to the vast palace in Palermo whence they came, except for one or two taken either by passing peasantry who slipped through the guards or by members of the company as souvenirs. ("Now we'll see if the Mafia really works," murmurs Giò Mazzarino as he consults certain influential persons about the return of the stolen goods.)

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From a specially built observatory room nearby the actual telescopes and astrolabes used by the old star-gazing prince have returned to a museum. Now the villa with its great outside staircase by Marvuglia and its frescoes by Integuglielmi has gone back to its occupants at the time Titanus waved a magic wand—hundreds of battery hens.

The wand has moved on—spreading its own form of exaltation and devastation. At Ciminna, one of those lost towns at the end of a dust-track whose roofs lie like leaves round a mother-church, one whole side of the main square has been re-built in "exasperated" baroque to represent the façade of the Salina palace at Donnafugata. Here, at the scene of the Salina family's arrival, while a band played *"Noi siamo zingarelli"* and townsfolk streamed across the square in welcome, Visconti himself was hurrying round with bellows, scattering dust (Max Factor's best) over Lancaster and his party, muttering to himself: "Death, death, like the corpses in the Capucins! This symbolises the first signs of the death of a class!"

Death takes over, with the heavenly bodies, at the grand climax of the film, the Ponteleone ball. Palazzo Gangi, its setting, is one of the three great houses still in private hands in Palermo, home of the Princes of San Vincenzo, scene of a state tea-party for King George V in 1925. Set in its own square deep in the slums of old Palermo with saffron and white façade interspersed with hanging gardens, it dreams over the surrounding squalor. Up a double branching staircase fit for the appearance of Armide are a gallery and ballroom of oriental splendour, French rococo twisted and gilt and re-gilt by local craftsmen, all reflected in innumerable mirrors, "conferring on the room," like that of Palazzo Ponteleone in the novel, "the look of some superb jewel-case shut off from an unworthy world." Who will the guests be? The compilers of the lists have run into Visconti's visual perfectionism; none of the women at the ball are to look in the slightest sunburnt. Under the pines of the Mondello Yacht Club the bearers of the island's great names, Lanza, Moncada, Alliata, murmur "Surely Stefanina San Vincenzo will never allow 'film-extras' in her house," and wonder if they might sacrifice their bathing and dance in the ball for charity. No one realises more than they that change is in the air. It is likely to be the last great ball on that scale in such a setting to take place at Palermo. And after it, for everyone, extras and grandees, "in the empty supper-room will remain only dirty plates, glasses with dregs of wine which servants, glancing round, hurriedly drain; while through the chinks in the shutters filters a plebeian light of dawn...."

*Archibald Colquhoun*

## Co-existing

To discuss the conditions of peaceful co-existence at any time—let alone at a week-end—might not be everybody's favourite occupation. Having recently participated in a seminar on this subject together with American, Russian, Polish, and other British journalists, I do not mind admitting that there were moments when my heart sank, and I registered a strong impression that I might be spending my week-end with more profit doing something else. This feeling was intermittent—it came at moments when an Eastern colleague produced what was obviously a complete brief of embarrassing quotations from British and American statesmen and proceeded to fire them off without the slightest attempt to either answer or, indeed, deign to notice what had been said previously in the discussion group in which we were both taking part; moments when the dread words "German revanchism" came crackling over the simultaneous interpretation, and one thought, "Oh, God! have we got to go through that again"; moments even, when, jaded after discussion and wanting a drink, one heard the good old Anglo-Saxon cry of "Who's for tennis?" go up from sprightlier colleagues. At all international gatherings there must be times when one asks oneself not merely whether co-existence has any meaning, but whether existence itself is not an exaggerated blessing.

At Selsdon Park Hotel the other week-end it would have been ungracious to let these dark and superficial thoughts prevail. For superficially there was discussion, and that (remembering similar gatherings in the not too distant past) was clearly something. We discussed in no sort of order—the only group which kept to an agenda was that ably chairmanned by Mr. Yuri Zhukov—a vast range of subjects stretching from what we all did in the last war to what we might possibly do in the next. The impression I gained was that we were all interested in argument, though I cannot remember anything we actually agreed on, and, indeed, the point was fairly frequently made that, given the different ideologies involved, we could hardly expect to agree anyway. But there was relatively little in the way of procedural wrangling, and the tone was amicable both in public session and private mingling, even the English sense of

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humour being appreciated by everyone except the interpreters ("Ha, ha! I understand. It is a joke."). The conditions of peaceful co-existence were not elucidated, but then I do not suppose that anyone had thought they would be.

OF COURSE, IT IS EASY ENOUGH to ask what good this sort of meeting does. Does it not rather do actual harm? A case against Selsdon Park can be made without too much difficulty both on the grounds of immediate utility and on those of Western advantage. It can certainly be said that any such confrontation of East and West finds the East relatively well prepared and the West both psychologically and technically ill-equipped to retaliate. It is a rare Western journalist who, when faced with an inconvenient quotation from an American general, can instantly begin to counter-attack with the fate of the Chechens, or Ivinskaya, or such other ammunition as is to hand. One of the few occasions when such a counter-attack was delivered at Selsdon Park was when references to the advocacy of preventive war produced the retort that Bertrand Russell had been among its supporters in his time. After that the subject was dropped.

In general, however, at such gatherings one has the impression that the Russians in particular are usually more effective than their Western opposite numbers, who have not developed to the same pitch of artistry the faculty of simply ignoring inconvenient facts and carrying on as though they had not been mentioned. Since one is there for the purposes of discussion, one's normal tendency is to try to put things in language which dogmatic opponents will understand, and the result is that debate between East and West is usually carried on in their, rather than in our, terms. At Selsdon Park the very subject under discussion—"the conditions of co-existence"—involved the acceptance of two premises: (a) that the "co-existence" policy is sincerely held by the Soviet Government, and (b) that it represents a genuine diminution of hostility towards the West and, as such, a Communist concession in the interests of peace. Now these premises may possibly be true, but their acceptance for the purposes of argument allows all the onus of militarism, pacts, bases, German rearmament, failure to reach agreement of nuclear testing and so forth to be thrown on the West. What "co-existence" really means is the ability to continue to live alongside systems of government which we neither like nor trust, but, as developed by Mr. Khrushchev and others, it has another sense: an invitation to trust the Soviet Union which, once accepted, allows expressions of pained surprise that the West shall be so patently unwilling to place itself at the mercy of Communist good intentions. The theory of co-existence is, in one of its aspects, a smoke-screen relieving the Soviet Government of the disagreeable necessity of having to make genuine concessions in the interests of world peace, while allowing its leaders to talk as if it had. A discussion as to the "conditions of co-existence" starts with the Western participants several points down at the outset.

Add to this consideration the largely unreal nature of the whole exercise, and it might be thought that a Western journalist would do better to spend his summer week-ends at home.

YET, THIS IS NOT QUITE certain, and the measure of uncertainty is sufficient to justify meetings of the Selsdon Park type. Perhaps their utility would be clearer if their object were re-defined. As "discussions" such encounters are unfruitful, since there can be no genuine debate without a readiness to be proved wrong on the part of both sides. If, however, they were regarded as exchanges of information, something of their true possibilities would begin to emerge. I have often suspected (and the study of Russian foreign policy tends to confirm this) that the Soviet Government was rather badly informed as to foreign public opinion and, in general, about what was going on in Western countries. It is, therefore, of mutual advantage that members of the Russian governing classes should meet face to face, and listen to the opinions of, a representative selection of intelligent Westerners. Such meetings cannot be expected to produce any immediately discernible effect, but in the long run may accustom them to take the Western point of view into account and may even bring them to realise that there are some types of behaviour which, ideological differences apart, are regarded abroad with genuine horror. If the meeting at Selsdon Park did anything to raise a doubt in even one Russian mind as to the humanity of the policy which culminated in the Berlin Wall, then it will have been worth while.

Moreover, the exchange of information is reciprocal. Talking to journalists from Eastern Europe either informally or over the conference table, it is fairly easy to distinguish the international questions on which they have genuinely strong feelings as distinct from those in which they are not really interested. At Selsdon Park, for instance, the German problem carried emotional undertones which were totally lacking in other fields. One remembered with a shock (and will continue to remember) that Russia, for all its world-wide interests, is still a European power in rather a narrow sense of the word.

In fact, for all its disadvantages and its frequent moments of horrid boredom, the Selsdon

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Park meeting did seem to me worth attending, and I was glad that I had done so. Provided that they are held in private and without much advance publicity, such meetings are in no danger of becoming part of anyone's propaganda machine and, therefore, it does not much matter who scores the greater number of debating points. If Russia (and Poland is hardly in question here) is thought to be advancing towards what we should consider as a more normal political system and less aggressively suspicious international attitudes, then contacts of any kind between East and West can only assist that evolution. If it is not, then no harm is done, and positive good may be achieved by conveying to some members of the Soviet élite that there are boundaries which they cannot cross without taking grave risks. For it is on their realisation of this fact rather than on any abstract theory of co-existence that world peace depends.

*Anthony Hartley*

# Revisionism at Bay

## *By Sidney Hook*

IT SPEAKS worlds about the nature of Marxism as a movement and body of doctrine, that the word "revisionism" should so largely be employed in Marxist circles as an epithet of abuse. Indeed, its connotation of disparagement is the only common element one can find in the wide variety of meanings the term has in the literature of socialism. After Eduard Bernstein, none of the bold reinterpreters of Marx's work, whether they read Kant into his social thought or Blanqui into his theory of revolution, proclaimed themselves "revisionists." They repudiated the suggestion they were revising or modifying Marx's views. They insisted that they were merely restoring his thought, purifying it from its corruptions, and presenting it in its pristine form. The process of re-discovering Marx still continues. Erich Fromm, who makes no bones about his frank revision of Freud, tells us with the utmost seriousness that Marx has been profoundly misunderstood, that he is really a Zen-Buddhist. Nor is this the most extreme re-reading of Marx and Marxism with which we shall be regaled in the future. Judging by some of the essays in the fascinating collection of studies in revisionism, recently edited with an illuminating introduction by Leo Labedz,* there are intimations that we shall soon be told that what Marx really meant is what Kierkegaard and Heidegger have darkly expressed in the scriptural writings of existentialism.

What makes this hostility to the term "revisionism," and to the processes of critical examination of Marx's thought, all the more paradoxical is the fierce insistence upon its "scientific" character by those who regard themselves as the watch-dogs of orthodoxy. For the very nature of a scientific statement requires that it be held tentatively, subject to the self-corrective procedures of the methods by which it is confirmed. One would have thought that to be scientific is to be committed to an attitude of revisionism. Ever since Charles Peirce developed his theory of "critical fallibilism" in the latter half of the 19th century, it has become a commonplace that every scientific statement in principle can be challenged and withdrawn in the light of the evidence, and in the interests of the systematic simplicity and fruitfulness of the body of knowledge of which it is a part. Eduard Bernstein, the father of "revisionism," whose stature as a man and a thinker has grown greater with the years, was one of the few revisionists among socialists who instead of pretending to discover Marx's "real" meaning declared him to be clearly mistaken in some of his analyses and predictions. He was able to cite Engels on some key points in the doctrine of historical materialism and the Marxist theory of the road to power as his predecessor in revisionism. Although Bernstein was unable to convince the pundits of German Social-Democracy of the validity of his criticisms and was condemned at the Dresden Congress of 1903, the practical programme of the German party was obviously more compatible with his revision of Marxist doctrines than with the official restatement of the Marxist position.

Bernstein was not a revisionist in the sense in which most of the men and movements have been labelled revisionist in recent years. For he was primarily concerned with the *truth* of

* *Revisionism*. Edited by LEOPOLD LABEDZ. Allen & Unwin, 37s. 6d.

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Marxism while the latter, in order to avoid declaring Marx's judgments and predictions false, have sought to reconstruct his *meaning*. They have done this not so much out of a misguided piety, to make Marx's thought immune to the refutation of events, but to combat in the name of Marxism the absurd notions and abominable practices of the Communist régimes that were being imposed on them under the banner of Marxism.

From the very beginning, the controversy over "revisionism"—which was conducted more like a crusade or intellectual pogrom against it—has been fundamentally political. Even in the early days, not the quest for the truth was decisive but the struggle for organisational power, the necessity for preserving a unifying myth, and for differentiating the goals of the socialist movement from the ideals of the larger, if vaguer, movements of liberal reform. To-day this is more patent than ever. In the current literature of revisionism, the very meaning of the term depends on how the Kremlin construes it, and it construes it strictly with an eye to the ever-shifting relations of power between the Soviet Union and other Communist nations, satellite or relatively independent, and between the Soviet Union and the non-Communist world. What makes Tito a "revisionist" and Mao "a dogmatist" is not so much any specific article of belief to which they are committed but whether or not they accept the hegemony of the Soviet Union, in fact if not in word, in the Communist movement. Stalin may revise Lenin and Khrushchev Stalin. These are "creative applications" of Marxism and all who refuse to accept the revision are branded "dogmatists." But in Communist quarters outside the Soviet Union, if new ideas in sensitive areas are put forth without benefit of the Kremlin's imprimateur, they are damned as "revisionist" no matter how skilfully buttressed they may be by Marx's own words and available contemporary evidence. The proclamation a few years ago that "revisionism is the main enemy of Communism" still stands, although some of the revisionists of yesterday against whom it was directed, like Tito, may soon return to the fold. The judgment reflected a fear that liberal, cultural tendencies among Communist intellectuals in the satellite powers would engender a political infection that would threaten "the unity of the world revolutionary movement," the euphemism with which the Kremlin refers to its ruthless control of the Communist satellites. To pronounce a movement or doctrine "revisionist" is to pronounce a sentence of death on it. It is an old story. The heretic is feared and hated much more than the unbeliever. For he is more dangerous.

In recent years a stream of books and articles against revisionism have come from the Communist press. Mr. Labedz quotes a typical judgment from F. Polyanski:

> The position of the revisionists on the fundamental questions of the Marxist revolutionary movement, its philosophy, political economy, and also its practical activity, is hostile to the unity of the world revolutionary movement and shows convincingly that *revisionists are the agents of imperialism in the workers' movement.*

The scope of this anathema against revisionism is indicated by the fact that even a theory of perception may be, and has been, regarded as a fundamental question of the Marxist revolutionary movement. The phrase I have underlined is a grim reminder that not only does the institutional basis for cultural purge and political terror still exist in the Soviet Union—everyone knows the fate which agents of imperialism deserve!—but that the habits of thought and feeling which developed under Stalin still thrive. All it requires is a nod from Khrushchev to set the apparatus of repression in train again with its grisly consequences.

If we look aside from the political aspects of revisionism and attempt to determine objectively who the revisionists are, and in what their revisionism consists, we must first reach agreement on the corpus of propositions which constitute the Marxist legacy. This is no easy task since, as we have noted, most revisionists affirm that theirs is the true or original Marx, and that the Marxist doctrines from which they are allegedly deviating, represent someone else's revision. Nonetheless there are some views which it would be bizarre to deny as central to Marx's thought—bizarre in the light of Marx's own text and the standards of interpretation normally employed by the revisionists themselves in reading the works of thinkers who are less controversial.

Consider, for example, two propositions. The first is stated by Otto Bauer, one of the outstanding figures of the Austro-Marxist school. He contends that according to Marx "neither dictatorship, nor terror, nor power can force upon a country a social order to which its productive forces and productive relations have not matured." This would hardly be disputed by any scholar of Marxism who was not a fanatical apologist for a party line. The second proposition is that Marx was a democrat who envisaged the transition to socialism as a mass movement, under some circumstances to be achieved peacefully, under some not, but in no circumstances through a dictatorship of a political party, and a minority one at that.

With respect to these propositions—and there are others—the greatest revisionists in the history

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of Marxism were the Bolsheviks themselves, and this independently of the truth or falsity of the views they revised. The very triumph of Bolshevism in the last forty-five years constitutes a refutation of Marx's theory of historical materialism in the form in which he expressed it. The mode of political decision determined the mode of economic production, not vice versa. The Bolsheviks, of course, were not the only ones who revised Marx; there was a Social-Democratic revisionism, too. But what is denounced as "revisionism" in the Soviet Union is not merely, or in the first instance, revisions of Marx's doctrines but revisions of Bolshevik revisionism. When revisionism expresses itself in a groping, cautious, Pickwickian manner in the satellite Communist countries, it is not likely to challenge head on the dictatorship of the party or even those antiquated notions in Marx, like predictions about the "pauperisation of the working class," which serve to keep alive the expectation that "capitalism will break down." It usually is directed against the Communist doctrine of *partiinost* which stresses the class and party character of all truth and serves as the apologetic premise for party control of the arts and sciences.

The Communist revisionist writers who, in the past, aroused first suspicion and then fury in the Kremlin sought greater autonomy in their creative work. In the nature of the case the demand for greater autonomy in literature, art, and philosophy threatened the monopoly of Communist power because it provided an occasion for expression of value judgments different from those held by the ruling hierarchy and imposed as mandatory on every organ of "opinion" in the country. This explains the different attitude the Kremlin adopted towards the natural scientists once the momentous consequences of the uses of nuclear energy became apparent. Aware of the extent to which Soviet military strength depended upon untrammelled scientific research, concerning which it had once been sceptical, the Politbureau was prepared to acknowledge that in this field it had no monopoly of knowledge. In the interests of survival and ultimate world victory, it called off its political dogs who had been worrying scientists with the obscure and obscurantist tenets of dialectical materialism. It is safe to predict that so long as peace depends upon "the balance of terror," Soviet scientists will be granted increasing freedom in the pursuit of their technical work although it goes without saying that this freedom will not extend to any policy judgments they make different from those of the Communist régime. Some Communist scientists in the satellite countries are presently combining a plea for freedom from ideological control in science with a ready acknowledgement that in the arts, literature, and social thought the guardians of orthodoxy still have a justified role. The real hope and test of liberation from constricting Communist dogma lies in the tolerance—it is too much to expect encouragement—of creative efforts in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and in freedom of criticism of social and political policy. This is the indispensable preface to "the diffusion of political power" which Mr. Labedz properly sees as "the decisive criterion of democratic development." It is an illusion to believe that freedom of research in technical scientific disciplines will necessarily carry over into other fields. Unfortunately, the history not only of totalitarianism but of authoritarian régimes shows that freedom is not indivisible.

THE HOPE THAT THE SENSIBLE ATTITUDE towards freedom of scientific research (important restrictions still exist on the selection of scientific problems) would gradually be adopted in literature and social thought has been disappointed. From the point of view of the power-holders of the Kremlin such extension would not be sensible at all. Despite expectations to the contrary, the freshness, variety, and spontaneity of nonconformist expression in Poland, which reached its height after the Polish "October" of 1956, are quietly but effectively being garrotted by economic measures. No satellite country apparently can for long permit a greater freedom to its writers, artists, and intellectual dissenters than exists in the Soviet Union without drawing upon its head thunder from the Kremlin which fears the effects of liberal example on its own creative talents perhaps even more than it fears possible disaffection among the captive nations.

ALL THIS has a bearing on the question of the continuing role of ideology in Soviet life and political practice. Some observers have confidently asserted that its influence is tapering off. They have interpreted a diminution in the intensity of the cultural terror, a strategic and popular move in the struggle for the succession after Stalin's death, as an irreversible step in its progressive elimination. Would that it were so! Events have so far not borne them out. One does not have to be a Marxist to recognise that the system of Communist terror cannot be completely explained by Stalin's personality. To do so is to continue in an inverse fashion "the cult of personality." There is a totalitarian potential in the Bolshevik-Leninist revision of Marx and the system of control it has set up which has so far remained unaffected by changes in the leadership. To be sure, under Stalin, Boris



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Pasternak and his friends would probably have been shot. But under Khrushchev, *Dr. Zhivago* still remains unpublished, Pasternak's memory is still dishonoured, and his collaborator is in jail.

One cannot but feel that latter-day revisionism within the Communist orbit and revisionism outside of it are profoundly different phenomena. They should have been more sharply distinguished than is done in these studies. They differ in motivation, goal, and moral quality. To apply the same yardstick to them or appraise them by the same criterion is to overlook the quality, which I can only awkwardly suggest by the word, nobility, that characterises the desperate gamble of those who are struggling for more freedom beyond the Iron Curtain.

In the free countries of the West, attempts to revise Marx by suddenly discovering a new philosophy or saving myth in his unpublished juvenile writings, based on a conception of human alienation, essentially religious in origin, and explicitly repudiated in Marx's published work are a *tour de force*. We owe the Western revisionists an attentive hearing but they must be judged in the same way and by the same criteria of evidence as we would assess a claim, for example, that Plato was really a Kantian or Plotinus a dialectical materialist. There have been sophisticates like George Santayana who having abandoned their Christianity still clung to their Catholicism; and there are some precious spirits who having abandoned naturalism and an historical approach to human nature would still like to be Marxists. It is one thing to propose a new philosophy of socialism for our age or to open up a new moral perspective for a world in conflict. It is something else again to father it upon Marx. Although the motivation is far different, intellectually these efforts remind one of some academic English fellow-travellers in the thirties who thought they could make Einstein and Freud more palatable to Communist doctrinaires by declaring that adumbrations of the theories of relativity and psychoanalysis were contained in the works of Marx and Engels.

Revisionism in the Communist world is something profoundly different from this. In some of the satellite countries silence is still suspect, in others a negative shake of the head is a dangerous political demonstration. In the Soviet Union itself (and increasingly even in Poland), in order to get a hearing in certain fields, in order to be published, it is *de rigeur* to present one's views as Marxist or as clearly compatible with Marxism. In the satellites the appeal must be from Stalin drunk (even if one means Khrushchev) to Lenin sober, and from Lenin sober (even if he remains unnamed) to Marx more sober (who must be named often). It may very well be that in these appeals undue weight is placed on one or the other feature of Marx's thought: that the democratic and liberal elements in his writings during the formative years, and certain asides in his letters and publicistic works, receive disproportionate emphasis. It is a venial fault. The revisionists are somewhat in the same position as free thinkers might have been in the Middle Ages—if we can imagine them—who wanted to extend the area of religious freedom. All honour would go to those who, defying the stake, openly avowed their views to the last, and their right to preach them. But would we consider less admirable those who sought to win religious freedom for all by deriving and justifying it as the first commandment of Christianity? Marx himself interpreted Deism in some degree as an expression, if not a disguise, of the free thought of the time. The profession of Deism permitted scientists to investigate the mysteries of God's creation with greater freedom from ecclesiastical interference than would otherwise have been allowed them.

To the extent that revisionists are seeking to enlarge the area of cultural autonomy, of freedom of speech and press and research, they can legitimately invoke the humanistic and democratic strain in Marx's writings. They are not inventing a brand new Marx or glorifying him as happy Hegelian miscarriage induced by an overdose of Feuerbach, or hailing him as the progenitor of Wilhelm Reich. When they speak of human alienation they are transparently criticising the fetishism of the plan, the party, the state, the dogma on the same moral grounds as Marx denounced the fetishism of commodities. They are less revisionist in their thinking on what is central to Marx's vision of the good society than are the Bolshevik-Leninists, past and present. They are the world's best hope for the democratisation of the Communist world, which in the long run is a more effective assurance of peace than "multilateral disarmament under the safeguards of inspection," as welcome as that would be. For such safeguards to operate adequately a relatively free public opinion is required.

At the moment things look very bleak for all revisionist tendencies in the Communist world. It is no slight thing to be denounced as "agents of imperialism" in Khrushchev's Russia, even if it has not yet been fatal. Kadar and Gomulka have taken the hint. The errors of the West in its cultural exchange and economic aid programmes with Communist countries have unwittingly made it easier for their régimes to

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inhibit revisionist tendencies. Since revisionists call themselves Communists, they can look to no moral support from Western governments which is just as well, for this would be tantamount to a kiss of death. Future internal crises of the Communist régimes whether generated (as Mr. William Griffiths expects) in the course of the struggle for accession after Khrushchev's departure, or by the re-birth of Communist nationalism, will provide occasions for renewed expressions of revisionism. Meanwhile and until then, acting independently in their own right and in behalf of their common values and aspirations, democrats and socialists in the free countries of the West should find ways of manifesting their solidarity with those who have not been cowed into submission by administrative chicanery and persecution by the Communist overlords.

Compared to the dangers and risks to which revisionists and their families are exposed, it requires little courage to be a political nonconformist in the West. The disparity is a measure of our responsibility.

*London Commentary*

# Tories Turning Left?

## *By Henry Fairlie*

ONE would almost think, from the fuss that was made, that Governments had never been reconstructed before. It was, of course, a dramatic reconstruction, both in its sweep and its timing. But ruthless? Deserving Mr. Jeremy Thorpe's empty jest, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his friends for his life"? It makes one wonder what people expect politics to be like, a kind of parlour game, in which no one is left without a prize?

> Nothing made him so "bilious," Pitt said once, as Cabinet reconstruction, but few so freely reconstructed; nor did he wait upon personal affection, or decent intervals, for the weeding out of inefficiency... he moved, when he did, with resolution and on public grounds.[1]

And so one should hope.

Lloyd George, it was said by those close to him, "showed little mercy to those who were broken in his service" and had "a kind of animal repulsion from a sick member of the herd." Churchill picked and dropped men at will, according to their usefulness to him. Attlee's ruthlessness in such matters was "not far short of cruelty." It will be a curious day in politics when it is no longer so at the top.

Why, then, the yelp of dismay from the Conservatives when Mr. Macmillan acted as he did? For two months, at least, before July 13th, Conservative back-bench M.P.s and a number of Conservative newspapers had been urging him to purge his Government ruthlessly. On Thursday, most of them would have accepted without demur the suggestion that the time had come for Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to leave the Treasury; on Friday, when he had gone, they lifted their hands in horror, as if one of the household gods had been impiously touched. Why?

The truth is that the Conservative Party had instinctively realised that the Government changes were more than changes of personality. There had been, as they might have said with Bagehot:

> a change of the sort which, above all, generates other changes—a change of generation. Generally one generation in politics succeeds another almost silently; at every moment men of all ages between thirty and seventy have considerable influence; each year removes many old men, makes all others older, brings in many new.... But sometimes there *is* an abrupt change.... In that case, the affairs of the company are apt to alter much, for good or for evil; sometimes it is ruined, sometimes it becomes more successful, but it hardly ever stays as it was.

Bagehot, of course, was writing of the effect on politics of the passing of Palmerston. To-day,

[1] Feiling: *Sketches in Nineteenth Century Biography.*

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our own Palmerston, if one can see him like that, survives: by his own will.

This is Mr. Macmillan's real daring. Whereas Palmerston "had not a particle of sympathy with the younger generation; he brought forward no young men; he obstructed all that young men wished," Mr. Macmillan in his changes has tried to preside over precisely the opposite effect. Himself almost seventy, he has put himself at the head of a Government which includes almost no one else of his own generation, and thereby invited the most obvious and damaging comparisons.

Apart from himself and Mr. R. A. Butler, every influential post in the new Cabinet has gone to the "new men," the post-1945 men. They had already, it is true, been tested as individuals; but they were now to exercise power as a group. No one could foresee the result. It was no wonder that the Conservative Party, recovering from the first blow, then suffered shock. It knew that a change of generation, generating other changes, had occurred. It did not know where it would be led; and Mr. Macmillan, by sweeping so clean, had left it with no obvious alternative. It was committed to the new leadership, whatever might happen, for ten, possibly twenty, years. Only a few eccentrics imagined that Mr. Lloyd would ever be recalled to power, the nominee of Lord Avon's venom.

IN POLITICS, perhaps more than anywhere else, men are changed by their positions. It is futile, therefore, writing a week after the changes, to attempt to forecast the direction in which the "new men" will take both the Government and their party. But there is one thing which can be said about them as a group. They are almost all men who chose to seek their careers within the Conservative Party at the very moment at which it had suffered a devastating defeat. As young men, they not only did not look longingly at the Labour Party's apparently unassailable majority: they set to work with a will, convinced that they could wipe it out. They did: within only six years.

This suggests more than a little solid conviction in them. They are Conservatives, not men who might in different circumstances have been Liberals or Socialists, and for this reason they can be expected to react to the "problems of the 1960s," or the threat of a Liberal revival, with the kind of firmness which only a coherent political philosophy or attitude can give. They are not—like some of the Telstars and others who jumped on the Conservative bandwagon, when it appeared to be rolling for ever towards wider and wider horizons—men off whom any political message can be bounced back to the electors.

The most important thing about politicians is that they react to situations; and, at the moment, the only guide to what they may do, and the success they may have, is their assessment of the situation which now confronts them. Fortunately, one such assessment has already been given to us, in print.

On June 20th, there appeared in *The Times* a report of a letter which Mr. Reginald Maudling, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, had written to his constituents in Barnet. It is almost certain (according to one's information) that he had then already received from Mr. Macmillan a hint of his impending new appointment; and his letter was a masterly way of ensuring that the significance of his promotion, when it came, would not be lost. The document is, indeed, a memorable one.

One of the most brilliant minds in the Government, Mr. Maudling had appeared, until the time of this letter, to show little eagerness for the chase for the highest office. But, in one stroke, he suddenly revealed that the long years of watching and waiting had not been in vain. His letter contained a single, beautifully contrived, sentence: "The 1950s have passed and taken their problems with them; unless we turn to the problems of the 1960s we may find that we have worked ourselves out as the last Labour Government did." With these simple words, he managed to dissociate himself from every policy which had been pursued by the successive Conservative Governments of which he had been—he made it appear—a reluctant and forbearing member.

But there is more to Mr. Maudling's letter than that. (Have the electors of Barnet, one wonders, yet understood that they may one day be as famous as the electors of Tamworth?) Writing like a politician thinking aloud, Mr. Maudling began his diagnosis by trying to describe "the new national mood which . . . is based on two factors":

> First, there is a realisation that liberty in a purely negative sense is not enough. . . . Secondly, there is the growing sense that affluence is not enough. . . . What is lacking in both cases is a sense of purpose.

To meet the first of these cases, Mr. Maudling said that it was "the responsibility of Government" to drive home the need for self-discipline in a responsible society "by constant explanation of the rights and duties of a free individual in a free economy and by determined action if powerful groups or organisations attempt to override them."

As he developed his argument, his message became more and more clear:

> To do this may be inconsistent with classic laissez-faire Liberal doctrine. But it is essential

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> for true freedom and a sound economy in the 1960s. I believe the people as a whole know this in their hearts and are waiting to be told it. There is nothing negative about an "incomes policy" in this sense; indeed, it is a positive challenge to buttress prosperity with moral responsibility.

The tone of this is far more important than the hints of actual policies, which were to be made explicit in his first speech as Chancellor to the House of Commons: it is almost the exact reverse of the attitude of *"Set the People Free,"* which was Conservatism in 1951; of *"Conservative Freedom Works,"* which became Conservatism before and after 1955; and of *"I'm all right, Jack,"* which was Conservatism in 1959.

For, what is important is, not merely that Mr. Maudling envisages an increase in Governmental intervention and control, but the objects for which he envisages it. These could hardly be stated more widely: for there is very little that does not come within the scheme of "buttressing prosperity with moral responsibility."

This is as clear when he turns to the second of his two cases:

> One further object must be to paint a clear picture of how much there is in this world, at home and abroad, that needs to be done, that is profoundly worth doing, and that can be fully done only by a country that has a sound and vigorous economy. This must be the sense of purpose for an affluent society. . . . This task, which Sir Winston Churchill described as "bringing the rearguard in," will provide a moral purpose that is missing from the search for rising personal well-being.

Here again, put in the strongest language, is the case for the widest Governmental activity in the country's social, as well as economic life. It can be seen in one of two ways: either as a reassertion of old Toryism in the Conservative Party; or as an attempt by the Conservative Party to model President Kennedy's clothes in Britain before either the Labour Party or the Liberal Party is able to do so. Neither is a completely false way of looking at it; nor do they contradict each other.

FOR THIS is the revelation which has shocked so many Conservatives in the Government changes: that, when fighting to retain power in a democracy, their Party will now always turn Left, and that it will do so, not only because there is no other way of appealing to a democratic electorate, but also because there is no other way of leading it. It is a hard lesson for some Conservatives to accept. But the pattern of the Cabinet changes; the predominance of the "One Nation Group" Ministers, especially on the home front; Mr. Ian Macleod's insistent Tory emphasis on "duties" rather than "rights," and Mr. Maudling's articulate summary of the present situation: all are the clearest, and accumulative, evidence of a marked shift to the Left in the leadership of the Party. There is now no longer a significant Right in Britain.

But there is one other factor of importance in the Government changes. Whether or not Mr. Macmillan survives his dramatic reconstruction, whether or not he discovers some new role to play which (it must be admitted) is not immediately apparent, the new Cabinet marks the final collapse of his pretensions to be the leading statesman of the West. Both the Conservative Party and the country were, for a time, beguiled by the same pretensions. After the Suez *débâcle,* Mr. Macmillan dramatically restored Britain's relations with Europe, with America, and with the Commonwealth: it was a remarkable personal achievement, but it tempted him, almost fatally, into a grandiose diplomacy. He proceeded to build himself up, not least dangerously to himself, as the constructive leader of Western policy; and the whole of his calamitous preoccupation with "Summitry" followed. It took him a year, after the collapse of the Summit conference, to sort himself out, and find his way back to something like reality.


# New Departures

If literature is what Doris Lessing notes ("analysis after the event"), **New Departures** is not a review of literature, but a preview of life: a periodical that has so far come out once a year, it will be quarterly as from No. 4 out this month: new departures by Bob Rauschenberg, Alberto Burri, Herbert Read, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Gregory Corso, Langston Hughes, Colin MacInnes, Alan Sillitoe, John Cage, Cornelius Cardew & see. Subscriptions (one pound for four issues) to 57 Greek St., London, W.1. Many of the texts are improvisatory, and should be sampled in performance in the aperiodical **Live New Departures**—travelling programmes of music, plays, poetry & jazz.


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—All of this—his own, the Conservative Party's, and the country's preoccupation with the Summit—was no more than an attempt to assert a lost supremacy; and the attempt was an important element in the carefree mood which was deliberately encouraged before the general election in 1959. That day has passed, with the reconstruction of the Cabinet: none of the "new men"—nor Mr. Butler himself—is much moved by illusions of Britain's strength. Indeed, their preoccupation is with her underlying weakness. Mr. Macmillan—even if he were still so inclined—is no longer in a position to persuade the Cabinet to ignore practical needs for grand diplomacy. (Mr. Spaak has only recently reminded us that it is a little too late for us to be putting on airs.) It is an important change.

The attempt to come to terms with Europe; the growth in Britain of what one Conservative newspaper has called "a healthy idealism of efficiency, a feeling that it is intolerable that any of the nation's resources or opportunities should be wasted by old-fashioned methods or lazy thinking"; the willingness, so evident in Mr. Maudling's letter to his constituents, to consider Governmental activity as the driving force in the country's economic and social life; the growing conviction that "something must be done" about planning our physical resources, about housing, about traffic, about education: all of these are evidence that the country is beginning to face realities.

THERE IS EVIDENCE of it, too, in the new Cabinet. Its political opponents may claim that a Labour Government would be ready to face realities even more convincingly. It may, or may not, be so. But what is true is that, from the Conservative benches, no Cabinet could have been chosen which more accurately reflects the new mood in the country as a whole.

I am not saying that the changes will be sufficient—or in time—to save the Conservative Party at the next election. But, even if it is defeated, it will now go into opposition in a much better condition than once seemed likely. It will at least have been given a sense of direction; and that direction will not be easy to reverse, since all the possible future leaders of the Party are now in high posts in the Cabinet and will be committed to the new purpose, if to nothing else. Objectively, indeed, it might be no bad thing if so powerful a team were forced, by opposition, to take stock, and return to power, say, seven years from now, equipped to organise Britain in Europe. But that is not how politics works. The new Cabinet will spend a year or more preparing to fight for a fourth term of office; and not even Labour observers rule their chances out altogether.

## A Fencing Lesson

Up on the glass mountain's knife-edge track
They midge him round, then onset ruthlessly
All through the night. In front, behind his back,
Lunge right, lunge left, parry, recover, he
Nimbles the swordplay through the laconic hours.
Deep grunts of effort make the only sound,
But sparks cascade or fountain big as flowers
And fade on the black air or the black ground.
These swordsmen far outthread the wit of man:
All night they play him—dance, curvet, sweep, turn,—
But never strike: though all the time they can.
At last the unnoticed skyline starts to burn.
Lights up for him what brings him up stock-still.
One weary swordsman cribbed in the mirror hill.

*John Holloway*

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# The Practical Visionary

*By David Daiches*

"I INSISTED that these images, whether symbols projected by the subconscious, or physical facts, should be made to explain themselves," Yeats wrote in 1932, explaining the grounds of his dispute with Æ. This was no new view of his; in the preface to the 1899 edition of his poems he had written: "I must leave my myths and images to explain themselves as the years go by and one poem lights up another." In his essay on *The Symbolism of Poetry*, written in 1900, he enunciated his doctrine of symbols: "All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of their preordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions, or, as I prefer to think, call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions...." Alternative explanations of how symbols obtain their meanings are offered almost casually; the important thing is that they have them, as the poet can make clear if he uses language properly. As Professor Stock, in her shrewd and sensible book on Yeats,[1] observes, "to Yeats as a poet the images matter more than their source."

The point is worth stressing at a time when an important section of modern scholarship on Yeats is concerned to refer us to Yeats's sources in his private reading and to draw from those sources a specific meaning for each Yeatsian image, thus reducing many of his finest poems to communications in code which can only be adequately received by a reader who possesses the code-book. This kind of scholarship is always interesting and often helpful, but unless its results are used with discretion it makes (quite unintentionally) nonsense of Yeats's claims to be a great poet. It is as well to turn from time to time from Yeats's explicators to the poet's own prose discussions of his intentions and his ideas about the nature of poetry, and it is a good thing, therefore, to have now collected in one volume[2] a variety of his "critical prose" (as Yeats himself called it), including *Ideas of Good and Evil*, *The Cutting of an Agate* (both long out of print), and three hitherto unpublished essays written for an abortive complete edition of his works. These essays provide the best commentary on Yeats's journey from a languid æstheticism to that later poetry which is both ritualistic and tough, both magical and astringent. As early as 1900, in his essay on Shelley, he gives us the symbol of the tower ruined at the top which so haunts his later poetry. He is discussing *Laon and Cythna*:

> ... and because I know how hard it is to forget a symbolical meaning, once one has found it, I believe Shelley had more than a romantic scene in his mind when he made Prince Athanase follow his mysterious studies in a lighted tower above the sea, and when he made the old hermit watch over Laon in his sickness in a half-ruined tower, wherein the sea, here doubtless, as to Cythna, "the one mind," threw "spangled sands" and "rarest sea shells." The tower, important in Maeterlinck, as in Shelley, is, like the sea, and rivers, and caves with fountains, a very ancient symbol.... It is only by ancient symbols, by symbols that have numberless meanings besides the one or two the writer lays an emphasis upon, or the half-score he knows of, that any highly subjective art can escape from the barrenness and shallowness of a too conscious arrangement, into the abundance and depth of Nature.

Yeats really believed in the "Great Memory," in the storehouse of symbolic meanings laid up on the memory of the race; he did not believe in a simple code-book approach to the interpretation of poetry, but set "the abundance and depth of Nature" against "the barrenness and shallowness of a too conscious arrangement." He did not expect readers of his poetry to read *A Vision* in order to be able to understand the poetry; that book, he tells us in the important introduction to his work that he wrote in 1937, was "intended, to use a phrase of Jacob Boehme's, for my 'schoolmates only'."

[1] *W. B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought.* By A. G. STOCK. Cambridge University Press, 27s. 6d.

[2] *Essays and Introductions.* By W. B. YEATS. Macmillan, 36s.



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SCHOLARSHIP WOULD LIKE to make Yeats out an esoteric, because that gives more for scholarship to do. But he was not an esoteric.

> I have always come to this certainty: what moves natural men in the arts is what moves them in life, and that is, intensity of personal life, intonations that show them, in a book or a play, the strength, the essential moment of a man who would be exciting in the market or at the dispensary door.

Yeats may sometimes have given what many consider to be over-elaborate or odd or fantastic explanations of historical and psychological phenomena, but these explanations were machinery or scaffolding that he sometimes found helpful in getting his ideas organised and they do not alter the fact that his main interests were in people and in history, not in angels and mystery. Miss Stock has a good discussion of the difference between even the early Yeats and the "companions of the Cheshire Cheese." For the latter, "life and poetry were two things so widely severed that it was impossible to be serious about both at once. The world they lived in was a huge going concern with fixed values; nothing they thought or said could shake it; at the most they could keep their art uncontaminated by its vulgar judgments, and that was much." For Yeats, on the other hand, the dream was there to be realised. He irritated his fellows at the Rhymers' Club, as he tells us, by trying "to show the dependence, as I conceived it, of all great art and literature upon conviction and upon heroic life." The encounter between art and life was always real, always fruitful, and the "antinomies" which in his early poetry he sees as absolute and which in his later poetry he subsumes in a dialectical pattern, do not spring from any facile opposition between art and life but are found within life itself. "Byzantium" has been called a poem about making a poem; it is also, and more significantly, about the desperate expedients of old age, the relation between body and soul, and the ultimate dependence of even the most coldly formal art on hot human passion. When, in his very last phase, Yeats turned back from Byzantium to "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart," he was turning not from art to life but from evoking a paradox to acting it out.

IN A SENSE, it was Ireland that saved him from the Rhymers' Club. The nationalist politics of Dublin and the country folkways of Sligo remained always inducements to reality, reminders of life as it is lived, insurance against an escapist æstheticism. He did not stay long in the Arcadian atmosphere of his youthful play, *The Island of Statues* (to which *The Song of the Happy Shepherd*, the first poem in his *Collected Poems*, was the Epilogue, "spoken by a Satyr carrying a sea-shell"). Among his earliest poems one finds Ireland—Irish folklore, Irish heroic legend, Irish country life—pushing him towards a kind of reality. In *The Madness of King Goll* and *The Stolen Child*, for example, both written in the 1880s, he counterpoints the familiar and the strange, the domestic and the wild, in ways which suggest the importance of the imagination's having roots in ordinary experience. Later, when he became involved in the practical affairs of the Abbey Theatre and found that "theatre business, management of men" forced him into a more exhausting kind of ordinary experience, it did not take him long to turn it to poetic profit, salting and tightening his style, strengthening it with epigram and with rhythms in which the colloquial and the formal met. After that, there was no escape from the practical demands of Ireland. The stupidities, follies, and intolerance of his "fool-driven land," the redeeming tragedy of the Easter Rebellion, the agonies of the Civil War, the problems of the Irish Free State, in all of these Yeats was involved both as man and as poet, searching in both capacities to focus the meaning of his country's history, to realise it in action and distil it in art.

There is of course a certain amount of truth in the popular image of Yeats as the symbol-haunted searcher among off-beat creeds, but it is not a very important truth about either the man or the poet. For him the test of a philosophy was the degree to which illuminating poetry could be based on it, not vice-versa. "In all his labyrinths," Miss Stock writes,

> poetry gave him a sense of direction to make up for the lack of a creed. Poetry is the common-sense of the soul: it distinguishes greatness from triviality, mere fancifulness from beauty that lights up the deeps of thought.

This is well said, and represents a central truth about Yeats. For him, Miss Stock continues,

> a poem is not great because of the beliefs it expounds, but when it convinces us of its greatness we know that it cannot have been made from false or trivial thoughts. The images in his poems had to impress by their own poetic rightness. What they symbolised was of no importance to the reader till their own power carried it home to him, but it mattered immensely to himself. He could not even imagine them with the necessary intensity except by labouring to make them express his deepest sense of the truth.

And his deepest sense of the truth, however far it may have led in visionary speculation, always pointed back to some aspect of Ireland.

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Yeats, in the general introduction to his work written in 1937, keeps going back to his hopes for Ireland. It was the old Fenian leader, John O'Leary, who first inspired him. "His long imprisonment, his longer banishment, his magnificent head, his scholarship, his pride, his integrity, all that aristocratic dream nourished amid little shops and little farms" attracted Yeats as it had attracted others, and it was O'Leary's influence on the eighteen-year-old Yeats that first suggested that dream of a new heroic Irish society which he never abandoned, and which is to be found in those great poems of the 1920s in which ceremony, courtesy, and stylisation of living are interpreted in the light of a neo-Platonic (yet not quite neo-Platonic) concept of the dance of life and related to the heroic cry, the gaiety of the tragic hero, and the vision of the artist-knight:

*Cast a cold eye*
*On life, on death,*
*Horseman, pass by!*

"Cold" as Keats's Grecian urn—"cold pastoral"—is cold, the coldness of art, which from one point of view is frozen gesture ("those poets with whom I feel myself in sympathy have tried to give to little poems the spontaneity of a gesture"); "horseman," knight and chevalier, as Robert Gregory, "soldier, scholar, horseman," had been. Art and heroism come together: art is the highest style of action.

Yeats learned from Plotinus, but he learned more from O'Leary and from what his experience of Ireland made O'Leary come to stand for in his imagination. He learned too from Lady Gregory and from Coole Park to see in the idea of the Great House and its way of life a symbol of the good life, the life he sought for Ireland:

*How but in custom and in ceremony*
*Are innocence and beauty born?*

Yeats went above or below the middle classes, to the aristocrat or to the beggar, for an ideal of human conduct. Between the two was old Paudeen in his shop, fumbling in a greasy till. This was no Marxist insight, nor was it related to the fashionable bohemian contempt of the artist for the bourgeoisie: it was born out of his own experience in Dublin, as any reader of *To a Shade* can see at once. It was the attitude of the Dublin middle classes to Synge's plays, to Hugh Lane's collection of paintings and to Yeats's attempt to realise his dream of a heroic Ireland that produced this stance. "Aristocracies have made beautiful manners, because their place in the world puts them above the fear of life, and the countrymen have made beautiful stories and beliefs, because they have nothing to lose and so do not fear, and the artists have made all the rest, because Providence has filled them with recklessness," he wrote in 1907. And in 1923, speaking as a Senator of the Irish Free State on the Damage to Property Bill, he supported the bill on the grounds that "this country will not always be an uncomfortable place for a country gentleman to live in, and it is most important that we should keep in this country a certain leisured class."

IT IS WELL to be reminded, as we are by the publication of his Senate speeches,[3] that Yeats was a member of the Irish Senate for six years and that his contributions were for the most part shrewd and practical. He never forgot his vision of a regenerate heroic Ireland, using it as a touchstone by which to evaluate specific legislative measures. The result is surprisingly sensible. He was all for the development of Gaelic scholarship and the endowment of Irish learning, but he had no use for such political gestures as printing railway tickets in Gaelic or having a Gaelic prayer read in the Senate when almost nobody could understand it.

"I wish to make a very emphatic protest against the histrionics which have crept into the whole Gaelic movement," he exclaimed in the debate on the Gaelic prayer. "I think this method of histrionics and going through a childish performance of something we do not know, and which we do not intend to learn, will ultimately lead to a reaction against the language. I wish to say that I wish to see the country Irish speaking."

Or again, in the railway debate: "When you put up, as this amendment proposes, a notice telling a man where he is to cross a railway line, you put it up to give him the best practical information. That is the only thing you have to consider. To put that up in the Irish language is to create a form of insincerity that is injurious to the general intellect and thought of this country and to create an irritation against the Gaelic language." His speech on the Irish copyright question is masterly in its lucid deployment of technical information and its persuasive use of examples, and he is both eloquent and detailed in his proposals for the improvement of schools. He dealt with the much vexed question of the Lane pictures with the skill of a lawyer. In all these speeches we can see links between his poetic and his political attitudes, but most of all we see this in his passionate speech against

[3] *The Senate Speeches of W. B. Yeats.* Edited by DONALD R. PEARCE. Faber & Faber, 21s.

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the proposals to impose the Roman Catholic view of marriage and divorce on the whole state:

> *I think it is tragic that within three years of* this country gaining its independence we should be discussing a measure which a minority of this nation considers to be grossly oppressive. I am proud to consider myself a typical man of that minority. We against whom you have done this thing are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created the most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence. Yet I do not altogether regret what has happened. I shall be able to find out, if not I, my children will be able to find out whether we have lost our stamina or not. You have defined our position and given us a popular following. If we have not lost our stamina then your victory will be brief, and your defeat final, and when it comes this nation may be transformed.

The more we read Yeats' autobiographical writings, his critical prose, and his senate speeches and set them side by side with his poetry and all these side by side with a straightforward account of his life—as is available in Joseph Hone's biography, now happily re-issued[4] and somewhat perfunctorily brought up to date—the more we see the unity of the life and the work. His divorce speech reveals where his search for a heroic Ireland had led him, and it is precisely where the poetry takes us:

> *I declare this tower is my symbol; I declare*
> *This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair*
> *is my ancestral stair;*
> *That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke*
> *have travelled there.*

"For it is undeniable," Miss Stock reminds us, "that he belonged in spirit not only to Ireland but to that maligned Protestant landowning minority of Southern Ireland, as surely as Wordsworth to the Lake Country or Rabindranath Tagore to the old ruling houses of Bengal." Yeats founded the modern mystique of 18th-century Anglo-Irish civilisation, which has given pause to those who always thought of Swift and Goldsmith and Burke as figures in *English* literature. The mystique is a genuinely helpful one: it supplies at once a tradition, a political viewpoint, and "metaphors for poetry." There are not many poets who have provided all three.

[4] *W. B. Yeats, 1865–1939.* By Joseph Hone. Second Edition. Macmillan, 30s.

# Novels

**The Kindly Ones.** By Anthony Powell. *Heinemann*, 18s.

**An Error of Judgement.** By Pamela Hansford Johnson. *Macmillan*, 18s.

**Catch 22.** By Joseph Heller. *Cape*, 21s.

"One passes through the world knowing few, if any, of the important things about even the people with whom one has been from time to time in the closest intimacy." At first sight this remark might be dismissed as a literary platitude, preamble to the basic plot of innumerable stories in which a narrator discovers that he has a lot to learn about "human nature." But the inclusion of those two words "if any" raises an enormity of doubt: it is typical of Anthony Powell's under-emphatic technique that the phrase has been thrown away so skilfully as to be almost invisible. Once spotted, it transforms the sentence from the urbane, glibly "philosophical" moral introducing a Maugham-like anecdote, into the most despairing question that a novelist can ask: is it possible to even know enough about other people to write novels at all? The question was asked by Proust, who answered it in the affirmative, and it is now reiterated, with almost monotonous regularity, in every new book by Michel Butor, Nathalie Sarraute, and Alain Robbe-Grillet. Those reviewers who, increasingly often, complain that *The Music of Time* is too exclusively concerned with the trivia of social intercourse, would probably hesitate to make so obvious a criticism of the *nouveau roman*. Of *course* social intercourse is trivial! But most of our certain knowledge of other people is of a social nature, and novelists to-day are hot for certainty—or, rather, are terrified of making rash assumptions about phenomena insusceptible of proof. The faculty known in Dickens' day as "fancy" and later called "imagination" or, more baldly, "invention," is now revealed as "guesswork." Often the theme of a modern novel consists of a series of guesses that turn out to be wrong. Similar deceptions are experienced again and again by Nicholas Jenkins, the unobtrusive narrator in *The Music of Time*. The sixth volume in the series—*The Kindly Ones*—contains a typical instance. General Conyers has announced that he intends to re-marry.

> I wondered who on earth was going to appear. A succession of possibilities, both ludicrous and conventional, presented themselves to the mind: ash-blondes of seventeen; red-wigged, middle-aged procuresses, on the lines of Mrs. Erdleigh; silver-haired, still palely-beautiful widows of defunct soldiers, courtiers, noblemen. I even toyed for a moment with the fantasy that the slight

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asperity that had always existed between the General and my sister-in-law, Frederica, might really have concealed love, dismissing such a possibility almost as soon as it took shape. Even that last expectation scarcely came up to the reality. I could not have guessed it in a million years. A tall, dark, beaky-nosed lady of about fifty came into the room. I rose. She was distinctly well-dressed, with a business-like, rather frivolous, air.

"We have often met before," she said, holding out her hand.

It was Miss Weedon.

"At Lady Molly's," she said, "and long before that too."

In a sense, this passage is a failure, as no reader will react with anything like the fascinated surprise that overwhelms Jenkins and, by inference, Mr. Powell himself. It is a bad moment for any novelist when he betrays greater interest in his characters than his readers are able to share. But the point of the episode lies not so much in the revelation that the General is engaged to "Tuffy," formerly secretary to the dashing Mrs. Foxe, as in the fantasies that pass through Jenkins' mind during the few seconds before Miss Weedon's entry. "I could not have guessed it in a million years." This exclamation seems to me to sum up the author's conception of life as a series of possibilities rather than events: what does happen is neither more nor less extraordinary than just what might have happened, and the pastime of prediction is irresistible just because it is a waste of time. "Reality"—what actually happens—has to be established, as it were for the record: but events in Mr. Powell's world are strikingly lacking in a sense of inevitability. A series of tiny shocks, their occurrence is arbitrary and their significance debatable—hence the repetitive patterns and loose construction of the novels, which have also been a cause of critical complaint. "They're all so alike," people have been heard to say, "one forgets which is which." Exactly: they are alike, and yet different things happen in each—but the incidents, which alter, are comparatively unimportant, while the failure to foretell and to interpret them is constant and essential to the novelist's theme.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE of this obsession occurs in *The Kindly Ones*. Jenkins unexpectedly spends an evening in the company of Bob Duport, with whose wife, Jean, he had once had a love affair. In what might have been a Proustian scene, Jenkins learns with agony from the husband that Jean had had another lover at the same time—whose identity, when revealed, amazes and disgusts him. The strange thing about this episode, making it very *unlike* Proust, is that it is completely devoid of emotional significance. Jean herself has always been a shadowy figure and many readers have probably never really taken in that Jenkins was in love with her, while they will certainly have forgotten all about the other lover, who made a brief appearance in the first volume of the series. As the chronicle develops, the cast grows longer and old members are re-introduced, Jenkins has again and again to interrupt his narrative with informative recapitulations. The result is an emphasis on fact rather than feeling, which becomes evident when the scene described is one in which feeling is involved: then, only its exterior manifestations are recorded. This elaborate reserve is one of many methods by which Mr. Powell achieves his ironic effects.

"I could not help thinking," he writes in *The Kindly Ones*, "that facile irony at my uncle's expense could go too far. No doubt irony, facile or otherwise, can often go too far." Here, perhaps, is the final irony: certainly, Mr. Powell takes irony as far as it can go. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of his art is the way in which, through all the understatement, scrupulous qualification, and tentative judgments, so much that is positive does emerge. While other modern novelists, who share his painful awareness of the


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limitations to our understanding of people and events, tend to take refuge in deliberate fantasy (like Iris Murdoch) or in the featureless specifications of the *anti-roman*, Mr. Powell has retained, and indeed refined on, the traditional novelist's faculty for character creation. His people may not be "larger than life"—rather, they are cut down to size—but they are very much alive. The episodes in *The Kindly Ones* that I have discussed are, in context, enjoyable and comic, because General Conyers and Bob Duport (in common with most of the characters in the series) have been exactly realised as unusual, yet recognisable human beings. And he can define the subtle essence of a place or a period with the same uncanny accuracy that both limits and liberates his portraits of individuals. The opening section of *The Kindly Ones* takes place just before the first World War in the bleak neighbourhood of Aldershot: the potency with which this peculiarly English atmosphere is evoked defies analysis. In his treatment of General Conyers and of Jenkins' father, Mr. Powell shows that he can write about military men with a freshness and truth usually denied to these stock figures. More than anything else, perhaps, he is a corrector of clichés. Again and again in his books one comes across some received idea (the way public schoolboys talk, what a "wild" Bohemian party or a débutante dance are like), that has hitherto been treated coventionally by even the most sophisticated of novelists, at last *got right*. The care with which he cultivates exactitude sometimes leads him into excessive detail over a comparatively minor point, and on these occasions the irony becomes a little heavy: but they are rare.

I finish every new instalment of *The Music of Time* convinced that Mr. Powell is the most intelligent and entertaining of English novelists writing to-day, and yet dissatisfied with the book itself. Perhaps a third reading of that pregnant passage can explain the dissatisfaction: "One passes through the world knowing few, if any, of the important things about even the people with whom one has been from time to time in the closest intimacy." Is this really true? *Doesn't* one know the important things about people with whom one has been intimate? Is it not rather the unimportant things that elude us, and surprise us when they are revealed? I suspect that Mr. Powell could tell us more about his characters, if he wanted to. But he prefers to keep them at a distance—and this may account for the remarkable clarity with which they take shape for us. After all, he is an ironist, and what could be more ironic than to write about unimportant things as if they were important? It's what the fashionable French novelists are doing, and they aren't even funny.

THE STANDARD OF CREDIBILITY set by Mr. Powell is so high that more conventionally dramatic novels must suffer in comparison. Reading *An Error of Judgement* after *The Kindly Ones*, I found it impossible to believe in: yet Pamela Hansford Johnson's observation can be fresh and exact. In this book she re-creates (through the narrator and his wife) an authentic social atmosphere which she has already established in her work: the new shabby gentility. Victor and Jenny live in a South London suburb; he makes about £2,000 a year as a personnel officer; she enjoys shopping sprees in Oxford Street. They inhabit a defiantly middle-class world, have a straightforward respect for the more obvious signs of worldly success, enjoy a good gossip about their few friends, suffer from constant small worries about money, and display an embarrassing candour about conjugal sex. This is not the first time that Miss Hansford Johnson has chosen a man as narrator, and I wonder why she does it, for although she is not an obtrusively feminine writer she cannot avoid small anachronisms: too automatic a reference to chiffon, a self-consciousness about swearing, an over-developed sense of personal drama.

But it is less these marginal points that seriously challenge credibility as the story itself, and the main characters who carry its burden. This is an ambitious novel, seeking to raise, within a framework of everyday domesticity, moral problems that are complex and profound. Setter, a distinguished physician, has detected within himself an inborn sadism which he has always managed to suppress. To preserve this streak of evil from temptation, he gradually divests himself of all responsibility and authority, but remains haunted by the fear that God (in whom he claims not to believe) may be deceived by his blameless life, make an error of judgment, and number him among the elect. He becomes involved with a youth who has committed a crime of revolting brutality. Thoughtfully, almost kindly, Setters murders the boy: God won't make an error now that he has a real sin on his record, and the boy will be prevented from doing more harm.

Miss Hansford Johnson does not shirk the vertiginous issues raised by her ingenious plot, and as moral melodrama it has a certain consistency. But her brave and patient attempt to marry this cosmic theme to her own special kind of seedy realism cannot succeed: and when, at the end of Setter's strange story, Victor and Jenny reassure themselves with the cliché "People don't do such things," one has to agree.

IN ANY WAR BOOK written to-day the hero, to be acceptable, must be a coward. To this extent *Catch-22* (Joseph Heller's long, mildly eccentric,

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and much admired "anti-death" novel) is conformist: its hero, Yossarian, is a coward. An American air force captain on a Mediterranean island base during the Second World War, he has flown too many harrowing missions and just wants to stay alive. On page 1 he is malingering; on page 443 he deserts. The pages in between are devoted to an indignant exposure of the madness inseparable from the military ethnic: Yossarian's desire for self-preservation is convincingly represented as the single evidence of sanity in the book.

I endorse the theme of *Catch-22* but cannot share in the general enthusiasm for the treatment. Somebody has likened it to a "Marx Brothers script written by Franz Kafka," which strikes me as an excellent description of the book and of my reasons for disliking it—for what could be more awful than that? Imagine a Marx Brothers film without the visual gags, given instead the portentous significance and endlessly repetitive design of a Kafka novel. Mr. Heller's main comic device is to exploit a zany inconsequentiality of dialogue, in which the speakers invariably end up where they began: tiresome in itself, this makes an effective comment on the meaningless of military ritual. But, trusting apparently that accumulation will provide some magic enhancement of humour, he piles these conversations relentlessly on top of one another, and repetition naturally exposes the simple basic formula of the joke. He also goes in for funny names: one character is called Major Major Major Major, another Major—de Coverley, and so on. In fact, he tries too hard. Mr. Heller may be a gifted and serious writer, but in this book he seems to have hit on a mannerism acceptable to fashionable taste, which could easily be spread too thin. *Catch-22*, perhaps, is the Jürgen of the 'sixties.

*Francis Wyndham*

# Soldiers in Politics

**Changing Patterns of Military Politics.** Ed. SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON. (*Free Press of Glencoe.* London: *Free Press, Macmillan, New York,* 56s.)

THE CLASSIC DILEMMA of military politics is simple and insoluble. It is how to combine minimum peace-time expenditure with maximum war-time security. We can trace it back, in our own history, from the present Government's decision to buy security as cheaply as possible by abolishing National Service and relying on nuclear weapons, to an earlier Elizabeth's similar attempt to combine a balanced budget with national safety by starving her armed forces and making promises to Continental allies which were fulfilled only grudgingly and partially, when they were fulfilled at all. As with all political questions, there is no simple solution. There are no limits to the demands which the military would make on the Treasury, if it had the chance, and there is no limit to the grants which the Treasury could make to the military, if it had the will. In spite of all the techniques which military analysts may perfect, the great questions of national security will be settled, at best by rough justice based on calculated risk, and at worst by weak administrations yielding to the strongest pressure groups. If the risk is calculated wrongly, as it was in England in the 1930s, the result is disastrous; if rightly, the government will get no credit for it from a public who, believing peace to be a natural "given" state of the world, can see no positive return for money spent on defence.

The protagonists in this conflict were once fairly distinct. On the one hand were the professional military chiefs, the "specialists in violence" as Harold Lasswell has unflatteringly christened them: easy meat for Left-wing cartoonists, but the men on whom the responsibility for national safety or disaster ultimately rested. On the other were the civil interests, anxious to spend as much as possible on national welfare and utilities or deeply hostile to any public expenditure at all. With money short even in peace-time, they resented every penny devoted to insuring against so unlikely a risk as war, and were brought to acquiesce in this expenditure as much by emotional and traditional as by purely rational considerations. War and peace were, in the Anglo-Saxon political tradition, clean different things. In spite of the work of a few dedicated civil servants like Lord Hankey, and in spite of the lessons of World War I, the former was regarded as something which could be safely left to the generals. Their requirements might be neglected in peace-time; but in war-time they must naturally be accorded an overriding priority.

When war and peace cease to be so neatly separated, a different sort of trouble begins. "In a world," as Professor Huntington puts it in his introduction to his new symposium, "where other forms of political violence are much more prevalent than direct inter-governmental violence, it must also be assumed that other types of military forces and of civil-military relations will replace the more familiar forms." In the contemporary world, the specialists in violence do not see their role as preparation for the next war. In the United States, more than anywhere

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else, they consider that the war has long ago begun, and they are playing an essential part in it. It is a war which is kept "cold," believe the Americans—as does our own Royal Air Force—only by their capacity to deter the Russians from overt violence by their own ability and readiness to retaliate; but under the shadow of this deterrence, the war is being fought out in limited fields, by propaganda, subversion, and guerilla techniques. It is not a question of keeping the peace, but of waging, with new weapons, a different kind of war.

If we *are* at war, the argument continues, then should not the requirements of the specialists in violence, subject only to the need of keeping the national economy functioning, receive an overriding priority? And even if it is a war being fought largely by non-violent means should not the control of the military be accepted in all relevant non-military spheres? That is the conclusion drawn by the extreme Right in the United States. It is, they believe, the duty of the military so to indoctrinate civil society in the realities of the present struggle, that its peacetime mentality no longer presents an obstacle to the waging of cold or limited war. How far this militarisation of American society, through seminars, reservists associations, and university courses is being successful, it is early yet to judge: the difficulties in the way of its total success in a pluralistic and democratic society are immense. But Professor Lasswell, in his contribution to Huntington's symposium, is sufficiently impressed by it to proclaim that the advent of the Garrison State, about which he warned us over twenty years ago, is now inevitable and imminent. We must, he advises, simply accept our fate with a good grace.

Professor Lasswell offers his countrymen only two consoling reflections for this alarming prospect. The first is that such a State need not necessarily be "militaristic" in the old sense of the word. We can indeed hope for a measure of "civilianism;" by which revolting neologism Professor Lasswell means "the absorption of the military by the multivalued orientation of a society in which violent coercion is deglamorised as an end in itself and is perceived as a regrettable concession.... Will the culmination be a truly civil garrison [asks Professor Lassell hopefully] where anyone resembling the traditional soldier or policeman is as out of date as horse cavalry?"

THAT IS ONE STRAW to clutch at, and anyone who has met the alert, intelligent, humane officers of the American armed services, with their dedicated professionalism, personal modesty, and unpretentious family lives, will agree that it is a substantial one. Our future masters are not, at any rate, going to be arrogant Prussians. The second consolation is that the Garrison State will provide a kind of social order and cohesion which our urbanised and hedonistic society quite patently lacks. The "specialist in violence," Lasswell suggests, "may be able to provide the model of social responsibility capable of mobilising the latent propensities of the young in modern societies." We know what *that* means. People like Lord Montgomery and the Duke of Edinburgh have expressed it in considerably more forthright terms; and before we start to sneer or guffaw at the idea of national service being good for the young, we need to think very carefully about the prospects before a society such as our own or that of the Americans, where family and religious restraints are increasingly eroded and which has nothing to offer in their place. It is relevant in this connection to read David Rapoport's contribution to the symposium, a comparative study of different types of nations-in-arms, in which he comments learnedly on the part played by military education in forming citizenship in various societies, from Ancient Greece to present-day Israel. "The Nation in Arms," as Jean Jaurès saw, need not be militaristic: indeed it can provide the best insurance against militarism. "Should armies ever entirely vanish," Dr. Rapoport quotes a Swiss pacifist as saying, "it seems to me that we in Switzerland ought merely to do away with ammunition, our military organisation being otherwise the best school of civic virtues and of sane patriotism...." We have seen the catastrophic evils which extreme perversions of this doctrine can bring about; but unless we are prepared to dismiss the concepts of civic virtue and sane patriotism as mere cant, the onus is on us to find ways other than that of military service to inculcate them.

SO FAR THE PICTURE looks pretty nightmarish. But if we are alarmed at the influence which the American military is acquiring with the nation, we should consider what happens when, as in France, military and nation drift ever further apart. M. Raoul Girardet's essay in this volume gives as brilliant and moving an account of the plight of the French Army under the Fourth Republic as is ever likely to be written. The picture is now familiar enough. Fighting continuously in Indo-China and Algeria while metropolitan France settled fatly back into the prosperity of the 'fifties, the Army found itself increasingly out of sympathy with the whole *Stimmung* of civilian life. The problem of the status of the military in the Cold War posed itself here in a different, and more acute form. "The French Army," M. Girardet points out, "is in readiness for war at a time when the

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country continues to live according to the rhythm and modes of peace." There was of course nothing new about that. But the French military were not merely ready for a war, but actually fighting one—and fighting one whose ideological nature led them to seek and propound an ideology as coherent and inspiring as that of their adversaries. But this ideology of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, as adumbrated by those brilliant and fatal colonels whose type has repeatedly led the French army to disaster, had no appeal outside the ranks of the army and its hangers-on; and "the intensity of these doctrinal, ideological preoccupations has led the military further and further away from the elementary and simply defined precepts on which was founded its traditional position of non-intervention in politics." The events of May, 1958, showed that the Army's loyalty to the government was conditional on the government's backing the Army in carrying out its self-imposed *mission civilisatrice*. And the consequent events have dug a gulf between Army and Nation deeper, perhaps, even than that which existed at the time of the Dreyfus affair.

WHERE DOES THE British army stand in all this? If we take the American and the French models as two extremes, the British approximates, though without any of its dangers, very much closer to the latter than to the former. British military leaders, the egregious Montgomery always excepted, have shown very little desire to act as schoolmasters to the Nation. Indeed the Chief of the General Staff welcomed the end of National Service with ill-concealed delight, averring that, however good it may have been for the Nation, it had almost killed the Army. The implication was obvious: now they could get back to real soldiering. That is, to regimental soldiering; which is not so much a profession related to current needs as a way of life, satisfying, stable, and for its participants, its own justification. In a recent turnover article in *The Times*, Brigadier Bernard Fergusson, defending the regimental system against unnamed bureaucrats at the War Office who were threatening, for reasons of administrative convenience, to tamper with it, did not do so on any grounds of its military efficiency or its relevance to the needs of the country which must extract the maximum contribution from the professional skill of every serving officer and man. His arguments were ones which might have been deployed by Mr. John Betjeman to save the Coal Exchange. It was historic, beautiful, traditional, part of our heritage, peculiarly suited to our national genius. It


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wanted only a plea for the retention of horsed cavalry to make the picture complete.

The truth is that a substantial proportion of officers in the British armed forces—in the Army far more than the other two more technical services—pursue their career, not as a serious profession, but as an *émigration intérieure*, a way of life which insulates them from a society with which, like their French counterparts, they have very little sympathy. Philip Abrams, in this symposium, gives an interesting and depressing account of what happens when they try to integrate themselves into the world on which, for so long, they have turned their backs. He notes how there is "not merely a general isolation of the officer from the 'economic and industrial facts of life' but a more immediate ignorance of the changed social relationships of post-war Britain." It is only this ignorance, arising from long seclusion in an artificially preserved hierarchical society, which makes the serving officer imagine that his career does anything to qualify him for "leadership" in the nation as a whole. "Personality apart," comments Mr. Abrams, "Service experience and training tend to isolate the officer from the civilian world, not to prepare him for leadership in it." Very senior officers certainly glide easily into comfortable directorships; but this, as Mr. Abrams makes devastatingly clear, is a result quite as much of their social and family backgrounds as of their professional expertise. For the rest, the transition from the cosy certainties of service life to a world impatient of anything save technical ability or financial acumen is liable to be very disagreeable indeed.

But it is significant that Professor Huntington should have included this as the only study on British military affairs in his symposium. It is a problem, certainly, of civil-military relations, but not of military politics; and it is hard to see what serious problem of British military politics there would be for him to find. Our generals do not aspire either to educate the nation, or to rebel against the government. Irritating though one may find their parochialism, there is something comforting about their refusal to get excited about the Cold War. If they can make their huge and clumsy bureaucracies work rather more swiftly, if they can circumvent the red-tape which swaddles all peace-time soldiering, if they can see that their units are contented and efficient, they have done as much as can reasonably be expected of them, and few aspire to do more. Reformers and politicians are as rare in the services today as they were before the war, and as unpopular; while at any attempt at reform from outside they close their ranks like a phalanx of Swiss pikemen. This is on occasion frustrating and may one day prove disastrous, but at least it is not a milieu which breeds Walkers or Salans. Whoever is causing trouble in Britain today, it is certainly not the military. The regimental system may isolate the military but it also tames them, fixing their eyes on minutiae, limiting their ambitions, teaching them a gentle, parochial loyalty difficult to pervert to more dangerous ends. It may be an obstacle to full professional efficiency; but it is perhaps a barrier to much else as well.

*Michael Howard*

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**Between Mars and Venus.** By Robert Conquest. *Hutchinson*, 12s. 6d.
**Haste to the Wedding.** By Alex Comfort. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*, 10s. 6d.
**The Blue-Fly in his Head.** By John Heath-Stubbs. *Oxford*, 12s. 6d.
**Poems, Golders Green.** By Dannie Abse. *Hutchinson*, 10s. 6d.
**A Sense of Danger.** By Vernon Scannell. *Putnam*, 10s. 6d.
**Control Tower.** By Richard Kell. *Chatto & Windus*, 10s. 6d.
**The Nature of Cold Weather.** By Peter Redgrove. *Routledge*, 10s. 6d.

Confronted with eight books by poets whose ages range from fifty-eight to thirty, the temptation is to start sorting them into schools. Since everyone has his own enrolment-system, however, and since I'm told that "the English scene is peculiarly amenable to literary history" (A. Alvarez, *The New Poetry*), I shall deal with them more or less in order of birth-date: a kind of literary history, maybe, but a harmless kind. And, to make sure that the job in hand has something to do with "the words on the page," let us begin with quotation:

*House, you are thridded with spectres. See, they press*
*Around me—ghosts of her mouth, her breasts, her eyes,*
*Her body's lilt. Yet would I exorcise*
*Them all, though it left us companionless.*

*That will be her memory's leitmotif?*
*All seems acceptable—an old house sweetened*
*By wood-ash, a whole family seasoned*
*In dear pursuits and country gentleness.*

As your eye skates through these two quatrains, do you feel an uneasiness? At one level, you



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certainly should. Both are by Cecil Day Lewis; but the first quatrain is the fifth stanza of a poem called "Retrospect," which appeared in *Country Comets* in 1928, and the second is the fifth stanza of a poem called "The Young Girl," which appears in *The Gate*, 1962. What is remarkable is how close the similarities are. Do over thirty years of experience lie in between? It's difficult to believe it: the gentle anguish, the elegiac tone, the sentimentality, the light rash of archaic diction and syntax, are all reflections of the same poetic personality. Between these two poems Day Lewis experimented with many voices and personalities, beginning with Donne and Yeats, and next—with some sense of strain—Auden. Then, about ten or a dozen years ago, the central Day Lewis personality began to emerge, but again it expressed itself in a voice we had heard before: a voice not only modified by Meredith and Hardy, and sometimes by Patmore, but one which was his own originally: wistful, rather self-indulgent, a voice which was a little too fruity for a man in his early twenties, and more suited to the gentle broodings of one who could look back into middle age with some satisfaction as well as some regrets.

Am I suggesting that Day Lewis has now, as they say, "found himself"? I'm not at all sure, because I'm not sure what there is to find. In a poem, "Sheepdog Trials," in his new book, he writes of

> *acts I recognise, with all they mean*
> *Of shepherding the unruly, for a kind of*
> *Controlled woolgathering is my work too.*

This is presumably meant to be a sort of definition as well as a self-deprecating remark, and indeed one can endorse it as an indication of what Day Lewis has been up to in his later work. In general—and I'm not including here the two long monologues in the present volume, or his "Requiem," or the handful of attempts at satirical verse—Day Lewis has been ambling round his mind, finding memories, incidents, views which he elaborates discursively and often whimsically. Take, for example, "View from an Upper Window": the poem begins listlessly with the view itself, and then goes on to pose questions about how the poet should use the images which the view suggests. All this takes thirty lines of low-pressure verse. The conclusion, in ten more lines, poses the idea that

> *Perhaps I should think about the need for frames*

and suggests, in the tones of a smoother and more sanguine Hardy, that

> *Each of* us *may be set here, simply to compose*
> *From a few grains of universe a finite view,*
> *By One who occasionally needs such frames*
> *To look at his boundless creation through.*

One feels let down. This genial, winsome moralising surely needs a bit more edge? The disturbances and uncertainties which set it off are too relaxed, too comfortable, rather too smugly phrased perhaps; but Philip Larkin, whose poems often start from similarly doubtful territory, has managed to take over this Victorian, mildly questioning impulse and stamp it with a firm, relevant, individual quality. Larkin does it by knowing what he is about, by controlling his wool-gathering a good deal more stringently than Day Lewis; in short, by being tough-minded with himself. I welcome the re-emergence of Day Lewis's own voice, but I wish he would give it some hard lessons.

Robert Conquest has a voice of his own too, but he gives it precious little chance under a smothering weight of abstractions. The words "poem," "poet," "poetry," and "art" loom up discouragingly on almost every page, and a hard, impersonal gloss stands between poem and reader. The true voice—witty, intelligent, sometimes exploding into a coarse giggle—can be found in "Vision," where Conquest forgets himself as a theoretician:

> *One sight I never happen to have seen*
> *Is a naked girl by the sea's edge.*
> *Photographs in a current magazine*
> *Lead me to believe I've missed something.*

The stanzas which follow are as much a definition of art as many more elaborately styled and explicitly formulated in *Between Mars and Venus*: again, a victory of directness over self-indulgence. The other poems on sex (the Venus of the title) are far too muffled, which makes them seem dull as well as pretentious. The poems on science are too often forced towards conclusions which the abstract language on the way just won't bear; though twice (in "For the 1956 Opposition of Mars" and "Jet over the Pacific") a more passionate involvement comes through.

Sex seems to interest Alex Comfort at least as much as it does Robert Conquest, and he lets it have a far looser rein. But the result is a sniggering jollity in the cause of straight-speaking, high-class dirt with lots of fashionable literary references, not unlike Aldous Huxley's poems of the 1920s. The blurb-writer has the nerve to say that "John Donne would have enjoyed them," which of course is unanswerable. All I can say, not speaking for John Donne, is that the Alex Comfort who wrote a handful of moving sensual love poems in the early 1940s seems to have degenerated into middle-aged prurience.

To say that John Heath-Stubbs is now writing

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better than he has ever done before is not, perhaps, to say very much: he has never been in the championship class. But when one thinks of the awful neo-classical elegances which he was writing during and after the war, poems which made one question the propriety of that much-bandied-about term "neo-romantic," it's an enormous relief to see the wit, clarity, and directness of many of the poems in *The Blue-Fly in his Head*. Some of them are pretty slovenly, marred by facetiousness and arbitrariness, and many are slight in theme or impulse; but among the lighter pieces "Bryant Park, New York," "Use of Personal Pronouns," and "Gecko" hit their targets neatly, and—much more resonantly—"In Every Sense of the Word" handles a difficult rhetoric with assurance. His literary-elegiac tone has almost disappeared, and the colloquial, off-hand voice has replaced it—taking more notice of prevailing fashions than Heath-Stubbs would probably admit.

It's a pity that the warm decencies which Dannie Abse offers are so often ruined by a prattling garrulousness. For pages he seems to natter away at the reader (or disastrously, in one poem, at God), occasionally striking strident ironical attitudes which make him sound like Logue on a bad day:

> *I am a Jew. Another Jew they deified*
> *yet murdered my recent relatives. Thus I rage.*

Yes, all right: but the tone is wrong, as wrong as the conventional phrase "But some of my best friends. . . ." Much better—in fact the best poem in the book—is "After the Release of Ezra Pound," which also deals with the Jewish experience, but by particularising, by underpinning the poem with faces and places, comes off. The larger gestures, it seems, don't often suit Abse, and perhaps he senses this when he writes

> *What use our permutations of despair*
> *if they leave no disturbance in the air?*

So that it's more of a relief than it should be to find him attempting a sardonic character sketch, like "The French Master," which puts several feet wrong but at least gives an impression of something being looked at pretty hard.

Vernon Scannell shared a niche with Dannie Abse in *Mavericks*, that rather unimpressive programme-anthology of six years ago which was intended to be some sort of counterblast to *New Lines*. I can't think that many people took much notice of such squabbling; and if this is what Alvarez means when he talks about the English scene being "savage with gang-warfare," I can only say that "savage" seems to me too full-blooded a word. More important is that Scannell's work has strengthened out of all recognition. Almost half the poems in *A Sense of Danger* are worth reading more than once, and if that sounds a very pale recommendation it isn't meant to be: I quite often come across poems that are worth reading once but with which I'd hardly want to live. "The Telephone Number," "Dead Dog," "My Father's Knee," "An Old Lament Renewed," have that combination of interest and skill which is so rare to-day; too often one finds either the first or the second but not both. Scannell's *forte* is the anecdote, often commonplace and banal in itself but organised—seldom forced—into a poem with real depths. This he shares with Larkin, from whom I think he has learned; that sense of

> *that emptiness*
> *That lies just under all we do*

is made more powerful by the concreteness of detail, the exactness of observation. *A Sense of Danger* is an impressively achieved book.

Richard Kell, too, though he lacks some of Scannell's confidence, has produced a worthwhile book, his first. The best poems here are domestic ("The Quarrel and the Jester," "A Word for my Son," "Time for Clipping"), and Kell also manages nicely a couple of those songs of experience ("Encounter in a Reading Room" and "The Pay is Good") which appears to be a type-poem of mid-20th century England. To say this is not to limit him at all, but to point out that here he has succeeded where many have attempted and failed; and I must guard against giving too solid an approval to themes and attitudes which I personally find congenial, when in fact Kell sometimes mishandles them. "The Woods," for example, a longer poem than most in the book, slips too often and too easily into that knowing tone which seems to demand responses it can't satisfy: little tricks of phrasing such as "Well, yes—of course/I see what you mean," "no doubt," "as we remarked."

The most original poet in this batch—which I hope doesn't suggest that he is the best—is Peter Redgrove. It's impossible to tell from *The Nature of Cold Weather* if there has been any real development in his work since *The Collector*, his first book, for it apparently contains a good deal of work which goes back that far. The marks are the same—dense texture, a vocabulary of thesaurus-like dimensions, grinding irregular rhythms, an aggressive and sometimes rather sweaty sensuousness. The assault on the senses is many-pronged:

> *The ghost of a mouldy larder is one thing:*
> *whiskery bread,*
> *Green threads, jet dots,*
> *Milk scabbed, the bottles choked with wool,*

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*Shrouded cheese, ebony eggs, soft tomatoes*
*Cascading through their splits,*
*Whitewashed all around, a chalky smell. . . .*

So it goes on, and the mind and senses reel. There is great force here and (as in some of the less successful work of Ted Hughes, from whom Redgrove has learned a lot) it is the apparent pointlessness of that force, the sense of enormous muscles being deployed on uprooting a daisy, which makes many of the poems tiresome to read. Redgrove's real strength seems to lie in work cast more dramatically, as in the superb Buffo Dialogue (in *The Collector*) or "Mr. Waterman" in the latest book. Perhaps he is a thwarted playwright of an unusual kind; anyone who saw "Mr. Waterman" performed by Hugh Griffith in a B.B.C. *Monitor* programme must have felt that here were the potentialities of a Pinter or Ionesco, different in kind but at least as powerful in effect.

*Anthony Thwaite*

# Shorter Notices

**The Making of Victorian England.** By G. Kitson Clark. *Methuen*, 30s.

Dr. kitson clark—a learned, cautious, and sensible historian, up-to-date on a wide range of recent research by colleagues and pupils—has now given both specialists and general readers a useful introduction to the essential and overdue revision of Victorian history. Disclaiming any ambition to provide a comprehensive account of the period, he sets out to isolate and to examine some of the forces which created Victorian England. Yet the arbitrary selection of such forces, while it raises acute problems of definition, may easily produce a distortion of the general picture. No one would deny the crucial importance for the period of the immense increase in population or of the course and effects of the Industrial Revolution. Dr. Kitson Clark treats both topics fully and often brilliantly, though it is disappointing that his caution inhibits him even from guessing, beyond a somewhat primitive and apparently inapplicable cycle theory, at a possible explanation of the population increase; and his decision to treat the Industrial Revolution "as nearly as void of moral significance as a change in the weather" prevents him from doing justice to the powerful Victorian opposition to industrialism. Why, if not on largely moral grounds, did Victorian opinion swing slowly away from the laissez-faire position towards a theory of State intervention and control? Dr. Kitson Clark's selection prevents him from dealing at all with the profound effects on the country of its growing Empire; and the great range and achievement of Victorian culture receives only the sketchiest treatment. His chapter on Victorian religion is of real originality and importance; but while the Angels of Church and Dissent get splendid treatment, the Apes of Darwinism and secularism are much less well catered for.

**The Middle Passage.** By V. S. Naipaul. *André Deutsch*, 25s.

"My expression is benign, my manner gentle," writes Mr. Naipaul of an encounter with a proselytising Gideon, "and all the way from Kingston to Nassau I received the Christian message." If one adds to benignity and gentleness wit and style, the two qualities which Mr. Naipaul considers characteristic of his native Trinidad, one has a fair sketch of *The Middle Passage*, an elegant canter round the West Indies which reads as smoothly as a Comet ride even when describing a journey by Land Rover into the interior of British Guiana. Inevitably, it reflects the writer's personality at least as much as the area's (Anthony Carson's Leamington or Durrell's Lausanne would both be anarchic and exotic places), but Mr. Naipaul has a Gibbonian talent for weighting his sentences with surprisingly hard facts, and his contrasts between the different forms of nationalism in different islands are admirably un-amateurish. He is also one of the fortunate people to whom funny things happen (unless he makes them up) with steady regularity, and who are quite able to do justice to them both at the time and afterwards. Even when his matter is most trivial, he is one of the most sensitive and musical handlers of the English language to-day.

**Twentieth Century Drama.** By Bamber Gascoigne. *Hutchinson*, 30s.

A review of two hundred words may not be the best place to say so, but a book which sets out to cover the whole of European and American drama since the First World War in two hundred pages runs a strong risk (to put it mildly) of being superficial. What keeps one's interest going in the *Spectator* every week may seem intolerably thin between hard covers. Mr. Gascoigne's style is clear if unexciting, his judgments are sensible if uninspired, and he has seen and read enough to cover all the relevant ground; but "cover" is all too much the right word. He might have done better to skate over less, and dig down into more: another twenty pages on Pirandello, whom he considers to have been seriously misjudged, or an amplification of his hopes for the future, pinned on the growing influence of Brecht, would have been worth ten thumbnail repetitions of orthodoxy on playwrights who do not even seem to interest him very much. This book can hardly be faulted as a brief guide on an elementary introduction; but it seems, for someone with an already established reputation, a disappointingly unambitious undertaking.

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**The Novelist as Philosopher.** Studies in French Fiction, 1935-1960. Edited by JOHN CRUICKSHANK. *Oxford*, 21s.

THE CONTRIBUTORS to this symposium distinguish themselves more than the editor, who has assembled ten essays on modern French writers under a deceptively general title, and written a brief but not very illuminating introductory chapter. Different critics have approached their subject with such very different preconceptions—ranging from John Weightman's Humean suspicion of Sartre's metaphysics to Geoffrey Hartman's Hegelian acceptance of Blanchot's—that the theme, for what it was worth, vanishes in a puff of eclectic smoke. One has only to compare this book with Irving Howe's *Politics and the Novel* to see how much more illuminatingly one person can deal with the interaction of fiction and abstract ideas; at least the abstract ideas will not change their shape every twenty pages.

On their own merits, however, several of these surveys are useful introductions to the novelist concerned. Cecil Jenkins on Malraux, Martin Esslin on Queneau, and John Weightman on Robbe-Grillet are particularly clear and informative. But the general discussion which they could have set up—whether on novels, philosophy, or the relationship between the two—seems always a long way away.

**Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions** By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. *Methuen*, 12s. 6d.

SOME people think Sartre's earliest work in philosophy his best. It is certainly brisker and more lucid than his later work. The *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions* was published in Paris in 1939, when the author was 34. It now appears for the first time in England, a short book, but very readable and well translated by Mr. Philip Mairet. As Mrs. Mary Warnock points out in a foreword, this "sketch" remains "the best source for Sartre's theoretical views on the nature of psychology." The book was written when Sartre returned to France after studying Husserl and Heidegger in Berlin, and during the first flush of his enthusiasm for phenomenology (before Merleau-Ponty had converted him to Marxism). His method is sometimes rough and ready, but none the less effective. He makes several good points against the theories of emotion put forward by such psychologists as James, Janet, and Dembo. But his chief object is to provide an alternative to Freud. For reasons partly Cartesian, partly phenomenological, Sartre will not tolerate the concept of the Unconscious. Indeed, since he defines consciousness as awareness, the Unconscious, for him, would be a contradiction in terms. Not all Sartre's attacks on psycho-analysis hit the mark, and in general his constructive suggestions are stimulating rather than compelling. There are times when Sartre's crankishness, his sheer lack of commonsense undermines his case. For example, having argued, very plausibly, that to faint in the presence of a wild beast is to retreat into a "world of magic," he goes on to make the exceedingly odd remark that running away from danger is no more rational than fainting; indeed that we flee because we cannot faint: "We do not take flight to reach shelter; we flee because we are unable to annihilate ourselves in unconsciousness. . . ."

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# FROM THE OTHER SHORE

## Poet's Return

FEAR, which had attached itself to me the moment I boarded ship, remained my constant companion throughout the journey. There was, indeed, little opportunity to forget its presence: it seemed to me as if I were descending, rung after rung, into Dante's Hell. The ruins of Le Havre, the harbour improvised from old iron barrels, showed only the exterior signs of destruction; Paris looked like a provincial town at dawn with American jeeps whizzing along its broad, deserted streets. When one evening Valy and I visited one of our old haunts, the Café Flore, we were the only guests. I didn't see one of the old waiters and the new ones hovered round us with painful, utterly un-Parisian politeness. When we reached Germany I wore my American uniform but this precaution turned out to be completely superfluous. When, with the ruins of Pforzheim in the background, the ticket-collector appeared in the door, my uniform made him too timid to ask us for our tickets; he pulled his head between his shoulders and slunk away. The miserably dressed German civilians dared not come into the compartment where Valy and I were alone, and this made me feel so bad that I would have changed my clothes at once had I not registered all our luggage.

In Prague bitter disappointment was awaiting me. Before my emigration I belonged to that group of Hungarians who not only detested but openly opposed the chauvinism of the Horthy régime. I had repeatedly gone on lecture tours among the Hungarian minority in Czechslovakia and it was always obvious to me that this minority enjoyed better living and greater liberty in this alien country than the majority in their own. I expressed this opinion in the Hungarian press, as well as my wish to see in Hungary a democratic system like that established in Czechoslovakia. For this opinion right-wing government circles called me a "Czech agent" and a "traitor," and started various court proceedings against me. The sentence, still pending, was one of the reasons of my emigration. But even apart from the deep and intimate friendship between Professor Vambéry, the two Masaryks, Professor Jaszi, and the former Czechoslovak Premier Milan Hodzha, we were, during the period of our emigration, in very close contact with the Czechoslovak government in London. We discussed all our actions with the Czech government and pledged ourselves in joint proclamations to promote, after the war, the co-operation, and if possible the federation, of our two countries.

IN PRAGUE I was received with icy coldness. The social democratic director of the Czech radio was very sorry not to be able to put me before the microphone, but he hoped I understood—after all, I was Hungarian. Minister Fierlinger who, a few months before, had offered to take my private letters personally from New York to Budapest, informed me through his secretary that he could not receive me. And when the director of the radio was showing us round we were almost beaten up in Venczel Square because, having no other common language, we were speaking in German. What was even more painful was the fact that the Czechs had succumbed to the same excessive chauvinism against which we had once so passionately fought in Hungary. The national minorities had been exchanged, but at the same time, allegedly for strategic reasons, the Czechoslovak government had annexed a small but densely populated part of Hungary. This annexation cut Hungary's most important artery of communication, the Budapest–Vienna highway, and created even more hatred between the two countries. I had to realise that the dreams we had cherished during the war would never come true, and that everything was going on from where it had been left off in 1939.

Jan Masaryk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom I had spent an evening in New York, received me rather coolly. When we were alone, however, he complained bitterly that he was helpless against the chauvinism reigning throughout the country, but particularly among the Slovaks, although they, having served Hitler eagerly, had nothing with which to reproach the Hungarians. During dinner he got drunk as usual, but without losing his gift for telling stories or his excellent humour. Then he expounded two sharply conflicting theories. The centuries of Austrian occupation and the years spent under Hitler's rule had taught both the Czechs and Hungarians every trick of the trade. We had learned how to serve the oppressor without putting ourselves in his hands. He referred to the Czech national heroes, to Tom Thumb and the good soldier Schweik who, while apparently submitting to it, had tricked brute force. The time had now come when we must listen with devoted expressions to Soviet orders, "smiling only with the wrinkles in our bottoms, under our trousers," as did the lackeys of the Byzantine emperors. Heroic gestures would be of no avail: we would have to speak "the language of flowers," be patient and cunning, as we had been under Hitler. The essential thing was to survive. It was his hope that the Western powers would in time discover that Stalin would have to be forced out of Central Europe by permanent political and economic pressure. Even the Russians themselves might realise that the exploitation of the Danube valley was not profitable and might,

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when the opportunity came—perhaps with the next palace revolution—clear out as the Tartars did in 1242, at the news of Genghis Khan's death. Then, at last, we could translate our dream of a Danubian Federation into reality.

His second theory was considerably more pessimistic. It was one of history's bitter jokes—he said—that Czechoslovakia, created by his father and Woodrow Wilson, should be annihilated twenty-five years later by another American president. We must discard our illusions, he warned me. Roosevelt had sold us to the Devil, bag and baggage. Now the Devil's commissars would roast us alive on the spit.

Masaryk told me all this with a plentiful seasoning of anecdotes and in a cheerful tone of voice. The table was loaded with bottles and bottles of the tart red wine made from vines brought from his fatherland and planted in the Moravian hills by the University-founding Czech king, Charles of Luxembourg. His words filled me with anxiety, but the more we drank the more ready I was to forget it. I lit one cigarette from the butt of another and watched the smoke caught by the draught and pulled out through the half-open window like a treble thread of blue wool. Whenever my eyes followed the smoke they fell on Russian soldiers walking impatiently back and forth on the hard, grey cobblestones under the window of the Palace.

THE NEXT DAY, in Pozsony, I found out that there was only one train a week from Pozsony to Budapest, which took twenty-four hours to cover a distance of two hundred kilometres. But what was even more annoying, I was told, was that the Soviet soldiers stripped everyone coming from the West of all their possessions. They also punished those coming from the East, who had nothing but their lives, for their poverty. A few days earlier the train from Budapest had arrived with three hundred completely naked passengers. The Russians had stripped everyone, including the engineer and the stoker. Only the very old and the children had been allowed to keep some of their clothes. Although I cherished no exaggerated illusions concerning the Soviet Union, had I heard this story two weeks earlier, in America, I should certainly have branded it as pure invention. But now, in addition to disappointment I was overwhelmed by the bitter realisation of my helplessness.

When I was demobilised at Fort Dix and my buddies found out where I was going, they presented me with some fifty woollen shirts and trousers to distribute among the poor in Hungary. I had with me new medicines, still unknown at home, vitamins for my mother, chocolate, coffee, tea, a few thousand cigarettes—all the things I would not be able to buy in Hungary. I had with me clothing, gifts, and various useful articles both for people I knew and for people I had never met; among them a hearing aid for a half-deaf communist ideologist who had only recently returned from Moscow. It had been handed to me by the ideologist's brother, a rich industrialist in New York, though he feared that he was sending his brother a treacherous gift, since only his deafness had saved him from a bullet in the nape at the time of the Moscow purges.

The woollen shirts had already been stolen from my suitcase by French customs officials, together with a bundle of manuscripts wrapped in them; approximately a thousand poems translated into Hungarian from almost every language in the world. I had made them during the seven years of my emigration, whenever I had nothing better to do, partly to keep my hand in, partly so that when I got home I could publish the first anthology of world poetry in the language. After that robbery I decided to defend the rest of my luggage with my life. I was saved by the captain of the best Hungarian football team, the FTC, who embraced me enthusiastically in the lobby of a Pozsony hotel. His team had beaten the Pozsony team the day before. They had come in their own bus and though there were some fifty people ready to pay for the ten empty seats, he said that they would gladly take us along free of charge.

THE NEXT MORNING we made ready to go. The captain, Sarossy, laid on a festive reception, making his team stand in a half-circle in front of the bus and sing an anti-fascist poem of mine, written ten years before, which had in the meantime been put to music. We were made to sit in the place of honour, in the front seats of the bus. Sarossy sat behind us, but kept silent—in a few minutes we would reach the Hungarian border and he did not want to interfere in my thoughts at that solemn moment. Strangely enough I was not at all moved. While Valy stared greedily out of the window, her beautiful long neck tense with excitement, I watched the hands of the driver.

I had already had plenty of time to delight in the landscape and the familiar environment during the week we had spent in Pozsony. This, the ancient Hungarian crowning-town, had become the capital of Slovakia twenty-seven years earlier. The people, the clothes, the manners of the waiters, the behaviour of the shop assistants, the shape and polish of the tumblers—all was as familiar to me as were the trees, the wild, deep blue of the April sky or the rounded, woolly clouds, white all over, without grey shadows, which conjured up the shapes of Ceylon, Sumatra, or Tasmania, sometimes an Iceland but never a New Zealand or a Celebes. One shore of the Danube, as we crossed the pontoon-bridge, was as like the other shore as the two shores of the Mississippi below St. Louis are alike. The approach of my country's border was heralded neither by a change in the landscape, nor by a change in the flora or the shape of the dwellings. When we stopped at it, it was with an entirely unexpected jolt, because we were in the Hungarian territory annexed to Czechoslovakia some weeks ago at the request of the Czech government, and while formerly the border had been marked by the Danube, now they had drawn it at random. Instead of the usual customs-shed we stopped in front of a villa-like building obviously requisitioned for the purpose. There was no barrier, only a telegraph pole laid across the road. A Soviet sergeant, two young men in civilian clothes, and a Hungarian soldier stood before the building—the latter in an

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unbelievably ragged uniform, like a veteran reduced to begging.

Valy and I were the first to enter the building, accompanied by the Soviet sergeant and a civilian interpreter. The sergeant glanced at our passports, flung them into an open drawer and announced they would be returned to us in Budapest as soon as I had explained to the authorities why I had fled to the West with the fascists two years ago. I saw no point in arguing, but Valy could not resist explaining to the sergeant that I had been an American, not a fascist, soldier. The Russian, who could not take his eyes off my nylon shirt, replied that there was no difference: the Americans were no less fascist than the Germans. He consistently addressed Valy as *Burzhujka*—which the interpreter omitted to translate into Hungarian.

As we were going out I noticed that the next passenger to go in, one of the paying guests in the bus—a squat and vivid Frenchman in striped trousers—showed neither his passport nor an identification card. Instead he pressed a pack of cigarettes into the sergeant's hand and this took care of all formalities. Sarossy applied the same method when the Hungarian soldier showed interest in the luggage; as a result, all he did was to climb into the bus, walk through it and get off at the other end. I stood despondently in the characteristically Hungarian, floury white light dust which lay as deep as puddles of rainwater. In the middle of my sole, under which, during the last seven years, air had been circulating, I felt the almost disagreeable pressure of Hungarian soil. When the bus rolled on I noticed that my pipe, which I had left in the ashtray, had disappeared.

THAT EVENING, while my mother and Valy were busy preparing supper, I walked up and down in my father's former study as he used to do, long ago, before meals. My mother, who had lost her husband, her daughter, and her parents within six months, had taken up the organisation of a new life with admirable energy. She had never worked before: now she earned her bread as a social worker and did her own housework as well. Her small body, topped by a disproportionately large head, like some ancient Chinese statuette, scurried tirelessly back and forth among the rather dilapidated furniture, kick-knacks, and keepsakes of the overcrowded flat. But the source of her energy was not in herself. Her strength had come from the knowledge that I would come back. At the moment of my arrival she almost collapsed at the front door. Later she grew a little calmer. Before sitting down to tea I discovered, in one of her wardrobes, the chocolate, coffee, and vitamin parcels I had sent her from America, almost untouched. My mother said she had saved them against my arrival, because I would probably be very hungry after seven years abroad.

Of our once very large flat she had been permitted to keep only two rooms; the second only because she had said she was preparing it for me. But in the drawing-room, where I now walked up and down, nothing had changed apart from the broken and still unreplaced window-panes and the bullet-holes. Only the palms were missing from the large Chinese vases; their place had been taken by pounds and pounds of beans. These had been saved before the siege to keep the family from starving, and my mother was still watching over them jealously, fearing that they might again be needed. In spite of the fact that a sharp wind was blowing in through the broken window-panes I was almost smothered under the heavy weight of conflicting emotions. I would have liked to go out for a short walk, but the house door was locked because of the early curfew. I could not even go up to the roof-garden, where I had so often sunbathed in my youth. My mother warned me that there was an unexploded bomb, and besides, the whole roof was covered by the excrement of the fifty Russians who had only recently moved out of the house and who had used it for that purpose.

ON THE DESK I noticed my father's photograph in the uniform of a lieutenant. This was how he had looked twenty-eight years ago, when he returned from the First World War and was approximately the same age I was now, returning from the Second. His huge, gold-braided collar, stiff, waxed, coal-black moustache—all the things imposed upon him by military regulations and the fashion of the day—contrasted strangely with the large and melancholy—even too large and too melancholy—eyes and the receding, frighteningly high forehead, not yet wrinkled but only furrowed. The sight of that high forehead reassured me, establishing at once that there was no likeness between us.

In the desk I discovered my sister's medical instruments, scalpels and syringes, in an almost completely new cedar-wood box. As I bent over it I could still catch the fragrance of the wood and the smell of the glue. Next to the box lay a few ancient, worn rulers, the Indian ink my father had used for his drawings, and a poem in German which he had written to me when I grew into a lad. As far as its form went it was not a very good poem; my father expressed in it his hope that I would grow not only into a unique phenomenon, an inimitable entity, like every human being, but into someone outstanding and unforgettable. Under the manuscript lay a bundle of clean, but now worthless, bank-notes. With this money my father, mother, and sister could have spent the war years in one of the best hotels in Switzerland, and if they had done so they would undoubtedly all still have been alive.

From the desk I wandered over to the bookcase. Its glass doors were damaged by bullet-holes, like the old Dutch landscape hanging above the mantelpiece. I knew from my mother that they had not been hit by stray bullets from the streets, but by the bullets of the Russian soldiers camping in the room who had shot up the furniture for their amusement. In one wing of the bookcase stood German classics in an edition nearly a hundred years old: Schiller, Goethe, Lessing, Heine, Herder, Wieland. On the central shelves was the literature of our century—or what remained of it after I had carried off the pick. On the other side was my father's scientific library. I soon came to the conclusion that the works on physics and chemistry had all become obsolete. So had Ernst Haeckel,

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Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte and Camille Flammarion's Astronomy, Muther's work on the history of painting and the illustrated chronicle of the First World War on the embossed title-page of which Emperor William and Franz-Joseph were holding hands above churning clouds while below them, in the battle-field, the German and Austro-Hungarian Armies were routing the enemy. Only in the middle of one of the central shelves, where a bullet had cut an irregular star-shaped hole in the glass, did I, to my pleasure, discover my father's favourite books: the Bible, Goethe's *Faust* bound in soft blue leather, and Schopenhauer's aphorisms. Because of the crack in the glass the titles on the spines appeared double, and between the lines which hovered obliquely one above the other, a small rainbow played hide-and-seek, like a message from another world. "Is that all that remains of a man?" I mused, trying to conjure up my father's picture: his black jacket; the thick, white, soft locks on his nape, like the petals of a chrysanthemum; his cheek-bones, on which the skin seemed to twitch with pleasure when, in his free time, he could put his violin under his chin.

IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS I visited friends and collected information. The nauseating, sweetish smell of superficially buried corpses which pervaded the squares and parks of the capital; the sight of the bagmen climbing the emergency-ramp to the only bridge over the Danube, pushing and cursing, in a long, black line like a stovepipe; the almost motionless cloud of dust hovering above the rubble from which broken beams and iron girders stuck out like the skeletons of antediluvian animals; the old friends and acquaintances whom I met again after seven years; the innumerable stories about other old friends and acquaintances frozen to death on the Russian front, shot dead by Hungarian gendarmes for their gold wrist-watch or by Russian soldiers for trying to defend their wives from being raped before their eyes; all this filled me with an almost unbearable tension, as bad as if I were in the middle of a battle among exploding grenades, dying comrades, showering bullets. My tension was increased by the fact that I had left the side of the victors for that of the defeated although it was with the victors that I was in sympathy.

I found out that I could obtain a job on a newspaper, write articles, be allocated a flat or could even deliver a lecture only if I joined one of the parties: it did not matter which party of the coalition, I could make my choice. I was in no particular hurry to find a job, but it soon became clear that it was impossible to live on the income from my books. Soon after my return home, my publisher paid me 300,000,000,000 pengoes for a new edition of one of my volumes. I ran to the market, because by afternoon the money was worth only one-tenth of its morning value, and bought with the three hundred thousand million pengoes a chicken, two litres of oil and some vegetables. I had transferred one thousand five hundred dollars saved in America to the Hungarian National Bank because I thought it would be dishonest to deprive the Hungarian state of the hard currency and to traffic in dollars on the black market. Now I had to discover that everyone possessed dollars—the taxi-driver, the waiter, the market woman—everyone except me, who had just arrived from America. Small wonder that nobody believed me. Had I brought my money with me I could have purchased a five-storey house, which I had no intention of doing. Everything, from American cigarettes and coffee to penicillin, had to be paid for in dollars. When I collected my money from the National Bank it was just enough for key-money for a one-and-a-half-room flat.

THE FIRST PERSON I visited was a school-friend, Gabor Goda. When, seven years earlier, we had said good-bye, Goda was a well-known short story writer, and a typical golden youth, witty, cheerful, cynical, and reckless. When my mother told me that he had been rewarded for joining the communist party with a high office in the municipal cultural department, I was surprised; but not very much surprised. He immediately suggested that I too should join the communist party. His first and most important argument was that the communist party, and only the communist party, disposed of funds. "We hold the sack," he said with some irony but also a little pride. His second argument was that though the country was governed by a coalition, and although within the coalition the smallholder's party held an absolute majority, the whole thing was no more than illusion. Real power, every key position, was in the hands of the communists; they were supported by the only real force, the Soviet army. To rely upon the West might be a noble idea but in fact it meant suicide, he stated, and threw me from the corner of his blue eyes a quick, sharp glance. This glance of pity and irony was most familiar to me; it was the way my friend had always looked at stupid people whom, for one reason or another, he still liked.

Another friend of my youth was Sandor Szalai, the journalist and psychologist, who in the meantime had become head of the foreign affairs department of the social democratic party. Sandor Szalai gave me an account of the political situation. He said that the programme of all four great parties was "socialism and democracy"; the difference was only that each had a different idea concerning the proportion of the two components. The Smallholders' Party, standing at the extreme right of the coalition, desired the largest possible proportion of democracy and the smallest possible proportion of socialism, while the Communist Party on the extreme left wanted much more socialism and much less democracy. The smallholders' party was led, on the whole, by very decent but slightly old-fashioned gentlemen who might not be exactly to my taste. The national peasant party had almost no members in Budapest except a few *narodnik* writers; and in the countryside, where the peasants loathed even the word "communism," its organisations were simply used as cover organisations by the communists. There remained the alternative of the two workers' parties, and about them I should have to make up my own mind. It was not a philosophical, a political, or an economic question, but simply a question of character. If I liked the barefooted Franciscan brothers and preferred St. Francis

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of Assisi to Ignatius Loyola, I must join the social democratic party; if I sympathised with the Jesuits, I must join the communist party.

Béla Zsolt, the most significant, most courageous liberal journalist of the country, received me with open arms in the editorial offices of his weekly *Haladas* (Progress). He asked me to work for his newspaper, then he outlined the situation. What the communists did in the Soviet Union was both economically and intellectually catastrophic. But their activities in Hungary had hitherto been praiseworthy. Had the Western armies marched into our country we should again have been saddled with Horthy and the Hungarian squirearchy, while as things now stood we had a parliamentary democracy and had even seen land-reform become reality —with a delay of a hundred and fifty years. The clearing away of the rubble, the restoration of public transport, the organisation of the national food supply and the admirably rapid reconstruction of the country were also primarily the work of communists. If we had only non-communist parties, he said, the deputies would still be sitting before the ruins of parliament, debating the clauses of the election law. The West, as had happened so frequently in the course of our history, had left us in the lurch again, simply because it did not realise its own interests in Central Europe. We could at least hope that the Russians would be more reasonable: it would not even be in their interest to establish here the same infernal system as in the Soviet Union.

Then Valy and I went to visit Bandi Havas. Bandi had arrived immediately after me. He came from London with his wife and his little son, as secretary to Count Michael Karolyi, President of the 1918–19 Hungarian Republic—who was received with a nation-wide ovation. Bandi had changed little since our days in Africa, although he was much more arrogant than before and spoke about Karolyi and himself in the first person plural. He embraced and kissed me enthusiastically, then, at vertiginous speed, he enumerated the current objects of his adoration. The first three among them were the heroism of the British people, Stalin, and my poems. He went on to expound various world-saving ideas but failed to notice that his ailing, skinny little wife had just walked up from the cellar to the fourth floor with a heavy basket of firewood, panting with exhaustion. To my great amazement he showed himself cautious in his political opinion; he declared that he would refrain from joining any party and suggested that I do the same.

THE NEXT MORNING I went to the headquarters of the communist party. In the gate I was surrounded by guards armed with revolvers who studied my identification papers very thoroughly. Then they asked me with whom I desired to speak. I replied that I wanted to see the head of the press department. They picked up the house telephone and from their conversation I learned that the head of the press department was called Laszlo Orban. Five people were waiting in the anteroom. When I entered, Orban, a smoothly shaved man with the look of a shop-assistant, whose nostrils were extended in triumph, herded a guest from his room, then took me by the arm and led me into his office. It was crowded with huge armchairs, leather settees, and a few monstrous dining-room chairs; collected, obviously, from several homes.

"We are glad, very glad, that you have come to see us, Comrade Faludy," he said with a gesture more haughty than originally intended. "We know that all roads lead to us. This is why we didn't take it amiss that you talked to your friend Goda first—who, by the way, is a good comrade—then to Sandor Szalai and Béla Zsolt. And finally with Havas," he added significantly. "He came to see us yesterday. You know, perhaps, that we are informed of everything——" I had turned my head away in disgust and was keeping my eyes on the thick red carpet. "You must not be offended, Comrade Faludy," the solemn voice explained. "We must know what an important man like yourself is doing."

I closed my eyes. I could hear the steady hammering, now almost familiar, which came from the Danube where workers were busy on the emergency bridge which had to be repaired all the time to prevent its collapse. It was the only bridge between the two sides of the city—and of the country. So they had been watching me since my return and this commercial traveller here was even proud of it. Perhaps he only wanted to impress me, or perhaps it was a manœuvre of intimidation. What would be the next step?

There followed, as I expected, a nauseating, clumsy, and to me almost physically painful glorification of my greatness as a writer. Then he said that the Party would rebuild for me a damaged villa, on Rose Hill, which had belonged to the executed Prime Minister, Laszlo Bardossy. After the inflation—which would last only a few more weeks—they would give me, naturally in secret, a considerable monthly salary. He added that he fully understood my inner resistance, for I had been in opposition all my life, but I must realise that the situation was different now, because "today the state is ours." I wanted to interrupt, saying that the state was not identical with the communist party, nor the communist party with us, but I changed my mind. In the meantime he had reached the point where he declared that the party wanted nothing from me except that, after I had had sufficient time to think it over, I should sign an application to join; though, if I preferred it that way, we could keep my membership an absolute secret, like that of....

He swallowed the rest of the sentence and became suddenly so embarrassed that he rose from his chair, sat down again, opened the upper drawer of his desk in which I glimpsed an iron box, then blushed to the ears and closed the drawer. I had been listening to his speech with such rapt attention that at first I didn't grasp what had happened. This is probably what he hoped, because that "like that of..." had undoubtedly been a slip of the tongue. I understood at a single glance that however much I might despise him, the man sitting opposite me was, in spite of his loquaciousness and vulgarity, highly discreet, at least in party matters: cautiously, painfully discreet because he knew that

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his marriage with the personified party which had lifted him out of a complete obscurity, would immediately be dissolved if he betrayed any of his experiences on the bridal couch. The "like that of . . ." was the introduction to a sentence the subject of which could be none other than Bandi Havas; it was he who had been here yesterday to sign the application of admission, which he had denied to me the same evening. His application lay in that iron box together, no doubt, with a large number of other such applications; that was why Orban pulled out the drawer, that was why he slammed it shut too quickly.

I felt my ears turning red and I wanted to rise, but Orban declared that he couldn't let me go yet. We had not finished with official business and he insisted that afterwards we should talk like friends. He picked up the telephone and ordered wine and biscuits. While he spoke he looked at me with shining eyes, he was obviously proud of his knowledge that I didn't like black coffee. Then he explained that he was too unimportant a man to discuss my affairs with me; therefore, upon learning that I had come, he had telephoned Zoltan Biro who wanted to talk to me. He was no longer in the building but in the afternoon he would send a car to pick me up.

"Who is Zoltan Biro?"

"Head of the party's cultural department," he replied, obviously surprised that I did not know. "And," he added, "he is Comrade Rakosi's brother."

"Half-brother?"

"No. Brother. Comrade Rakosi has several brothers but all have different names."

"Why?"

"Because there can be but one Comrade Rakosi."

THE DOOR of the first-floor flat in the large apartment building opened the second my hand touched the bell. I stood before my host, a grey, tired, elderly man with a completely expressionless face. He did not resemble his brother, who, in his pictures, looked like a round-headed, genial, provincial shop-keeper. This man led me into the library, then excused himself and left me alone. On the bookshelves I noticed the collected works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, all in Russian or German editions; a number of ideological works, all in Russian, a thick book on socialist realism, also in Russian and a few Russian authors, naturally in Russian. There was not a single Hungarian book among them. I pulled out at random a German edition of Marx's *Das Kapital* published in Leningrad: the pages were uncut.

On the desk lay open a thin little brochure, also on socialist realism and also in Russian. There were marginal notes in Hungarian, underlinings, and here and there exclamation marks. Also on the desk was Stalin's portrait in a frame—not the photograph to be seen on posters and above the front doors of houses, nor the rarer one in which the Generalissimo was lighting his pipe; this picture was even smarter, and coloured into the bargain: Stalin, in a white jacket with all his war decorations, coming down a flight of marble stairs: a ballet dancer, a *maître d'hôtel*. Judging from the decorations it was taken during or after the war, but apart from a few silver hairs, Stalin's head was a shiny black—at the age of sixty-five. This is socialist realism, I thought. I was overwhelmed by a wild desire to make myself independent of the joyless atmosphere in this joyless room, and went to the window with its lace curtain. Night was falling: the sky shone a pearly blue and the setting sun painted the windows opposite a fiery red.

"What a beautiful sunset," I said when Biro reentered the room with the coffee. He threw me a frightened, helpless glance; it was obvious that in the circles in which he moved they never discussed such a subject. He placed the tray on the table and instead of joining me at the window, he sat down. It appeared to me as if he were thinking; thinking very intensely. He was probably trying to guess whether there was a trap in my question and how he should reply to it.

"Yes," he uttered at long last. As if he were trying to calm down a madman or a naughty child. He spoke slowly and in a low voice, exactly like an actor playing Stalin in a film, and his words were accompanied by small, gentle gestures.

HE WAS WELL INFORMED about my affairs. He inquired about my wife, my mother, my friends in America. Then I tried to find out how long he had lived in the Soviet Union, what he had done there, whether he had a family, what he had accomplished in the fifty or fifty-five years of his life, but he eluded my politely formulated questions or pretended not to hear them. What interested him most was what Laszlo Fényes and my other friends —whom he had probably known though he did not say so—thought about the Hungarian communists. For the first time I seemed to detect some emotional undertone in his questions, the emotions of a man physically and spiritually crippled during the years of the Moscow terror, a man tormented by feelings of inferiority and yearning for the praise of his opponents. Had I stuck to the truth I should have repeated Fényes' own words: that he hated the Hungarian communists more than his own excrement. But I felt suddenly sorry for my host and selected a few sentences in which, as a rare exception, Fényes had something good to say about one individual communist or another. Biro was so pleased that he broke into a smile, but he craved more and more praise so that finally I was compelled to lie.

Then without any transition, he translated to me a paragraph from the brochure lying on the desk. It explained that socialist realism was the most advanced literary method, all the more so as it portrayed man in his social interdependences with scientific exactness, and therefore the central committee of the Soviet communist party advised writers, in their own interests, to apply this advanced method in their work. When Biro asked me what I thought about it I decided not to be so weak as I had been when I praised the communists in Fényes' name. I asked him whether the author of the brochure was a professional writer. When he replied that he wasn't I said that this was obvious. A writer writes books and not Orders of the Day

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for other writers. A writer knows that methods of writing cannot be made uniform, nor can they be prescribed. There are impressionist writers, surrealists, romantics, socialist realists—but most writers are several of these even in the same book. Only someone entirely divorced from literature can conceive the idea that a writer must follow a certain method. I granted that Zhdanov was not alone in his idea; there had been many theologians and Church Fathers in the past who had prescribed subject, form, obligatory source-material, and an optimistic ending. Thus, in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries profane poetry was persecuted and only religious themes were tolerated. The poet was obliged to write his poems in iambic verses of four feet, grouped in four-line stanzas—that is, in Ambrosian verse—could choose his theme only from the Bible and had to stick to its words. And the optimistic ending was: *Hail to the Father, hail to the Son and also to Thee, balsamic Holy Ghost, from century to century, from millennium to millennium!*

"So Comrade Faludy believes that there is no socialist literature?"

"I didn't say that. There was also Christian literature, and a very important one. Jacopone da Todi, Thomas of Celano, Hildebert de Lavardin, Pierre Abelard, or Adam St. Victor, for instance. But they wrote at a time when the Church no longer insisted upon determining the visions of the poets and, consequently, the poets were no longer obliged to put the resolutions of the Synods into rhyme. . . ."

The names I mentioned made Biro blink; it was obvious that he had no idea what I was talking about. At any rate, he said, I would have to read and learn a great deal. Then, again without transition, he began to talk about the social democratic party. He explained how important the role of that party was in Hungarian democracy; but it could fill its role only if the left-wing elements were in the majority. Unfortunately, the social democratic party was teeming with deadly enemies of the communists, to mention only the right-wing Anna Kéthly and the Trotskyist Pal Justus. . . .

"Approving of everything you and Orban agreed upon this morning," he continued calmly, "I think it would be best if you joined the social democratic party. Then you could report to Comrade Révai or to myself every week, in urgent cases more frequently, on what is going on in the headquarters of the party and in the editorial offices of *Népszava*."

I felt that I was blushing furiously with excitement.

"You don't know me and you cannot know me," I replied. "You must have left Hungary when I was still a schoolboy. Since then I have lived in New York and you in Moscow, or I don't know where. . . . For this reason I am not offended by your suggestion. Let us pretend that I have not heard it, and let us forget about the whole thing. Perhaps we could speak about something else. . . ."

WITHOUT BETRAYING HIS discomfiture by the slightest sign he turned the conversation to writing in Hungarian, emphasising the very large edition in which the communist publishing house could publish my works and what gigantic royalties I could obtain for them. Half an hour later he went out for more coffee and then, while I was sipping mine, repeated his offer in identical words, except that I should have to report not to him but to Révai, or even to Rakosi himself. I rose and took my leave stiffly. In the hall he tried once more to make me change my mind but I gave him no reply. When I reached the street I noticed that Biro was just closing the window above my head; he had probably given instructions to his driver. When I approached the car, the chauffeur turned away his head. This was rather bad: the streetcars did not yet go so far out, it would have taken me an hour to walk home and there were only thirty minutes left to the curfew. Everyone seen in the streets after that hour was shot down by the Soviet patrols without warning.

I DIDN'T KNOW anyone in the neighbourhood at whose house I could have spent the night and I began to run as fast as I could. Ten minutes later I caught sight of the illuminated windows of the social democratic party headquarters. There were no guards at the entrance, as there were at communist party headquarters. The bespectacled porter was reading a book, he didn't even look up as I entered. A notice on the lift door announced that it was out of order. I ran up the steps. At the second floor I came upon a group of young people who recognised me from my picture in the newspaper. A red-headed, bespectacled boy of perhaps sixteen looked me over arrogantly from head to foot.

"Are you that George Faludy who came home from America to be hung by the communists?" he asked, with a strange mixture of boyish insolence, curiosity, and awe.

A few minutes later I sat in Anna Kéthly's room. While I was racing along the dirty, dusty streets between damaged houses, pictures of horror had been flashing through my mind. Now, suddenly, I was calm. Already the friendly, relaxed disorder of the party headquarters and the insolence of the red-headed boy had given me a feeling of ease, as if I had come from the barracks to a club, from an interrogation by the chief inquisitor into a pub; and the supreme calm of the lady minister opposite me, her cool, hard beauty, completely restored my balance. She was almost sixty at the time, but still wore her beauty like an icy halo. Perhaps it was not so much an attribute of her femininity as the reflection of her moral conduct shining with noble and even permanence from her incurious but observant eyes and her smooth, fresh complexion. It was a great joy to sit face to face with someone with whom, however different our views might be, I agreed on the most essential things, namely that honesty was more important than cleverness, character more important than success. When we met in the corridor she greeted me with cool friendliness, just as if we had last seen each other seven days, and not seven years, ago. She too was probably recalling the obituaries that bound us together. In 1943 it was rumoured in Budapest that I had been killed in Burma in the

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fight against the Japanese. Kéthly wrote a beautiful obituary in which she paid me homage. A year later, when the Germans invaded Hungary, Kéthly was put in a concentration camp but in New York it was believed that she had been shot. At that time it was I who wrote her obituary, in the weekly paper of the Hungarian emigration. Without mentioning these happenings we were now looking at each other with the resigned tenderness of those who had given each other the last rites.

On the wall opposite hung a few postcard-sized portraits. Kéthly began by telling me that the best thing for me to do would be to write poems and forget about politics. I had no need whatsoever of the social democratic party, though the party needed me. And not only the party but the whole country. They needed, in the first place, my lectures, my journalistic work, my educational activities, my erudition. After a thousand years, the question whether there should or should not be a Hungarian democracy was now in the balance. She wondered whether, for a few years, I should be willing to sacrifice my work as a writer and become a teacher? The main thing was that I should not judge by what I had seen in a hysterical capital, but should go to the countryside, look around, give lectures, hold seminars. And if I disagreed with the Marxist teachings, I could always talk about myself, about literature, about America, about whatever I pleased. And if, returning to the capital, I decided to make the sacrifice, the party would be glad if I joined *Népszava*. The party was poor, the cause important, the sacrifice great but, she hoped, not vain.

While she talked I looked absentmindedly at the pictures on the wall. Had anyone else made me a similar offer I should undoubtedly have rejected it, but Kéthly asked me with such sincere warmth that I was unable to do so. Nor did I feel like starting an argument on the vanity of the sacrifice, because we both held that one should serve the cause one considers just, or partly just, regardless of its chance of success.

THE FIRST PICTURE on the wall represented Sandor Petöfi, the poet, struck down in one of the last battles of the 1848–49 War of Independence by some horseman of the Tsar who didn't permit himself to be influenced by the fact that the poet, unarmed, was watching the battle from the edge of the road. Then came a portrait of the scholarly-looking Béla Somogyi, one-time editor of *Népszava*, who was blinded with a penknife by Horthy's white terrorists in 1920, tied with barbed wire and thrown, still living, into the Danube. The subjects of the third and fourth photographs in the row, Illés Monus, former secretary of the social democratic party and the round-headed, grey-haired Uncle Gyözö Gergely, former night-editor of *Népszava*, were well known to me. A year and a half before, when they were hiding from the Germans, a social-democrat turned nazi recognised them in the street and shot them dead.

"To-morrow, I'll leave for the country and start looking round, Annuska," I said, "and when I come back I shall go to work at *Népszava*." I was recalling all the others whose pictures were not on the wall, because all the walls of this little room and all the walls of the corridors of the social democratic headquarters, and all the walls of the houses along Rakoczi street were still not long enough to hold them: the rebelling Hungarian peasants impaled by feudal landlords, the freedom fighters killed in battles against the Turks and the Austrians, the prisoners of the Seven Towers in Constantinople and the dungeons of Kufstein and Josefstadt; those executed by the German henchmen of Buda or hanged by Franz-Joseph after he had counted up to a hundred before signing their death-warrant, upon his mother's advice, lest history call him a cruel monarch; those murdered by the white terrorists and those tortured to death in the Svabhegy villas of the Gestapo, and those shot into the Danube by the Arrow Cross.

The nervousness and fear that had been my constant companions since I boarded the ship in the harbour of New York, disappeared. I had become aware of and resigned myself to the situation: I was at home and had to submit to the customs of the country. To die for freedom or to end one's days in prison for liberty was not considered a very special feat in these parts; the view I had hitherto taken of the matter was indeed exaggerated.

*George Faludy*

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# LETTERS

## Dylan Thomas

SINCE I am mentioned in his review, I would like to state that I support Mr. Spender [ENCOUNTER, July] in everything he says against the balderdash of Mr. Alvarez about my late friend, Dylan Thomas

As one who knew him from his early years in London, throughout the war, in New York, and who had the misfortune to be present during the hysterical scenes which accompanied his death in St. Vincent's Hospital, I consider myself to be in a position to affirm that "the destructive element" in Dylan Thomas lay within himself.

Had he been another person he might have resisted those who helped him to his self-destruction. But that is specious. He was not Mr. Alvarez, but Dylan Thomas, and the poet who was Dylan Thomas.

RUTHVEN TODD

*Palma de Majorca*

## Nabokov & Pushkin

HAVING slogged, stumbled, staggered, slipped (and skipped) through the dense fifteen-page thicket of Vladimir Nabokov's "Pushkin and Gannibal," an inchoate accumulation of scholarly trivia in the worst tradition of American academic research, I think I'm entitled to ask some questions.

What is Mr. Nabokov up to, exactly, since *Lolita*? Is he, from some Puritanical scruple, punishing the admirers of that exhilarating *jeu d'esprit*, among whom I count myself, by now subjecting us to such pedantic mystifications as *Pale Fire* and such midden-heaps of undigested facts as "Pushkin and Gannibal" (which actually succeeds in making something connected with Pushkin extremely boring)? Or is he perhaps trying to prove that despite the popular success of *Lolita* (and of the movie, whose screenplay he wrote) he is still a respectable member of the intellectual establishment? If so, may I assure him that many of us prefer his livelier, more disreputably literary side—as displayed in *Lolita*, *Pnin*, and his superbly unacademic little volume on Gogol—to these recent manifestations, which seem to be controlled by the spirit of that Dr. Kinbote whom he thinks he is satirising in *Pale Fire* but who seems to have taken demonic possession of his creator, so that the book and the present article are in the Kinbotean rather than the Nabokovian mode?

Finally, would the editors of ENCOUNTER have printed Mr. Nabokov's fifteen pages had they been submitted by an unknown graduate student at, say, Cornell University?

DWIGHT MACDONALD

*New York City*

[*But then would we have published Mr. Macdonald's letter had it been submitted by some unknown humourless reader from, say, Greenwich Village?*—ED. NOTE.]

CRITICISM is valid only when illustrated with examples. Mr. Dwight MacDonald offers none. Hence his criticism can apply only to a delusion (especially since he conjures up an "unknown graduate student"—who would have been the redemption and glory of my years of professorship, had that student ever existed).

VLADIMIR NABOKOV

*Zermatt*

## Wesker and "Chips"

I ENJOYED reading Nigel Dennis's article on *Chips With Everything* in your August issue, if only because his savage work of demolition may do something to redress the critical balance. For, let's face it, our leading critics went mad over this one, pumping it up with such praise that it is difficult to see what words they will have left in the kitty when a play of real "height" and "grandeur" comes along.

Yet at the end, I was left as unsatisfied by Dennis's deflationary tactics as I was by the genuflexions of Hobson, Tynan, Levin, Muller and Co. Exaggeration aside, Wesker has written an interesting play, and he has placed it with great courage in an area of conflict which is central to our time. He knows that all movement in our society, not merely travel, is founded on the "first-class" and "second-class" principle, and that you don't alter the reality by changing the labels to "first-class" and "tourist."

He understands also that convict-settlements are out-of-date and that the modern method of dealing with a rebel or a nonconformist is to take him into the bar and buy him a few drinks. The gin-and-tonic system is cheaper, quicker, and more effective since it avoids the danger of your subject ending up as a martyr.

All this is, as I see it, part of Wesker's theme in *Chips With Everything*. What I find strange, unbelievable, and terrifying is that he started out with a central truth and finished up with a lie. For, despite all its good intentions, this is what we are left with at the fall of curtain—a beautifully produced lie.

Mr. Tynan swallowed it whole. Of Wesker's working-class characters he wrote: "... one feels ... that this is how they were...." If this were the truth, God help us. Luckily, they did not exist this side of Wesker's imagination and never did exist, notwithstanding the occasional accuracy of observation and some excellent dialogue.

We see them waiting, lumpen-like, for a Messiah. They listen in fascination while the middle-class boy



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Pip gives them lessons in history and pronunciation. They beg him to lead them, to teach them. They have not even the initiative to organise a simple operation like scrounging a bucket of coke. Pip has to show them how, just as he persuades them to sing "The Cutty Wren" as a symbolic act of revolt.

Wesker sprays this group of men with an attitude so lofty and patronising that it turned my stomach. Christ—anyone who has even been in the ranks knows that the one thing that working-class lads excel at is organised scrounging. They need no teachers for this. The men in my old unit would have pinched the entire dump of coke and then gone back for the barbed-wire while Pip was still thinking about it. For sheer wit and native intelligence (as opposed to education) they would have made rings round a character like him. Nor is there any lack of leadership or leaders among working-class people as the history of the last 150 years can prove. There are morons in the working class, of course, and perhaps a greater number than elsewhere, due to conditions which Wesker knows well. But he has selected a *symbolic* group and in all that group there is not one with the wit or the strength to outwit Pip, even to punch him on the nose in his more boorish moments.

Moreover, Wesker has missed something fundamental to working-class character. The more intelligent preserve their dignity and independence by a subtlety which long years of experience have bred in the bone. I have seen this quality in action, in the army and outside, a thousand times and always with delight. The officers call it "dumb insolence." It is basically an ability to call a man with less intelligence by a high-falutin' title, and yet to remain untouched, unlowered by it. In this respect, Good Soldier Schweik was a hundred times more representative than Wesker's sprogs.

Sometimes it seems that he is aware of his own condescension, and he tosses in the odd speech to prove that he is not. I have heard it argued that the incident in which Pip is gently but firmly refused the privilege of washing Smiler's feet has a certain symbolism, in the sense that he has been proved unworthy. I fail to see what this does to alter the general bias of the characterisation. It has been argued that the characters are not meant to be realistic. This they certainly are not: but if they are intended to be symbolic or representative the failure is even more obvious. (There is, in fact, a technical weakness here. The working-class characters are drawn with a certain superficial realism, while the officers are clearly mere symbols. Once again, Wesker has marked the cards.)

This central flaw in Wesker's work is nothing new. It was present, though not to the same extent, in *Roots*. This was a fine and memorable play on its presentation in London (though I have since seen it a couple of times in repertory and without Joan Plowright and the guiding hand of John Dexter it appeared much more ordinary), but even so, the same tendency to distort the working-class characters was present. The Beales and the Bryants —Beatie apart—were just too doltish, too animal-like to be true. And in the attitude of Ronnie Kahn as expressed in *Roots* and seen in *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* there was the same airy condescension. Ronnie was a bloody bore, and Pip is merely an extension of him.

To sentimentalise the working class is stupid: but to patronise it is worse. Yet one can see why it happens. A lumpen-mass, lacking initiative or culture requires missionaries, and it is in this role that Wesker appears to have cast himself. No one doubts his sincerity, though I am a little sick myself of staring at other people's exposed and bleeding consciences. I have one of my own to look after.

*Chips With Everything* makes an interesting contribution to contemporary theatre and fully deserved the obvious care and skill lavished on its production. But Wesker is too young and too good to be canonised. To put his work up there, in terms of praise, with *Juno and the Paycock*, for example, or *Death of a Salesman*, is not only cock-eyed. It does Wesker and our theatre a dis-service.

TED WILLIS

*Chislehurst, Kent*

## Commitment

ENCOUNTER improves and entertains what mind I have and Mr. Tynan guides my views about the Theatre. But Mr. Tynan in ENCOUNTER (August) has me beat. Are his Notes on dining with the Lord Mayor entertainment or guidance to good manners?

He accepted an invitation to the equivalent of a private, if formal, party—which he was perfectly free to refuse. He then makes money (presumably) by laughing at host and party in the public press.

1—*Dress.* The Lord Mayor, he says, should not have specified evening dress, for this is symbolic of an "upper" class to which he does not wish to aspire, and by having to hire it he was forced to appear to do so. Why does he draw the line between "tails" and dinner-jacket? What does his dinner-jacket symbolise to the unskilled labourer? Anyway, do clothes make "upperness"? Or is it behaviour, such as lack of self-consciousness and consideration for others? Wouldn't a natural "upper" say, whether born in a slum or a castle, "If you have to slink in like a dog to buy 'tails,' don't go to the party. And don't wear hired clothes with no pants or make a shop assistant uncomfortable by faking homosexual behaviour, just because you couldn't be bothered to buy a new pair on the way to his shop." (These could surely have been popped on at the Garrick. It's quite near Moss Bros.)

2—*Guests.* These were all right, except that a "bevy of scientists" were unknown, poor things, to the "one-cultured mind" of Mr. Tynan. Why do humanists like to boast that they don't know Galton from Heisenberg? Scientists as a rule try to know Browning from Pound.

3—*Food.* This, it seems, wasn't bad, though the chicken was oddly cut; and the wine, we may guess, was good. But Mr. Tynan thought it his *duty*

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to "flout the useless and invalid custom" of enjoying their flavour and bouquet, by *smoking* "halfway through dinner." That this was against the custom of the house and might reduce the pleasure of neighbours with more delicate palates did not, apparently, break the rules of good manners.

4—*Music.* As background music Sullivan Operas and the like were unworthy. Did Mr. Tynan want Wozzeck? And did his fellow-guests?

5—Finally, *Speeches.* Mr. Tynan complains that the Lord Mayor welcomed his guests in "pedestrian prose." Would a second-hand speech written by Christopher Fry have been better, or should Civic Dignitaries be chosen for their gift of oratory?

At least we now know what a party given by a Lord Mayor for Artists ought not to have been. Will Mr. Tynan improve our taste by describing the ideal party—dress, guests, food, music, speeches, behaviour and all. As a woman I am anxious to learn.

This sounds like a frivolous letter. It is not meant to be. As long as influential people like Mr. Tynan indulge in inverted snobbery—except when speaking of scientists, when it is the other way up—so long will silly class-consciousness continue to afflict us.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

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